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# Revista Nacional DE ADMINISTRACIÓN

Escuela de Ciencias de la Administración  
Universidad Estatal a Distancia

## PRESENTACIÓN

En el contexto de la crisis sanitaria de la COVID-19 que visibilizó la incapacidad gubernamental y privada para enfrentar integralmente las consecuencias de esta crisis; y que también evidenció la subjetividad de cada persona para encarar la afectación que el virus produce y sus resultados inmediatos (familias, grupos de trabajo y grupo social inmediato), de un virus que se transmitió a nivel mundial a escalas aceleradas, y dejó desde el primer caso reportado en el 2019 hasta noviembre de 2021, 251.370.630 millones de personas infectadas y 5.071.273 millones de personas fallecidas y el colapso generalizado de los sistemas sanitarios en el mundo.

La COVID-19 evidenció cómo los poderes formales del Estado (Ejecutivo y Legislativo) aprovecharon la coyuntura para formular nuevas leyes y modificar leyes existentes en beneficio de un sector de la sociedad y en contra de las inmensas mayorías. Siendo afectadas las mipymes que debieron cerrar los negocios, mientras algunas pocas empresas operaban en la normalidad. Así pues, millones de personas reclusas en sus hogares durante la pandemia debieron optar por la opción de teletrabajo, que benefició a los empleadores en cuanto al ahorro de los gastos de electricidad, internet, agua, luz, gas, e incluso suministros de oficina, de limpieza y de cuidado personal; que antes de la crisis sanitaria, recaía en los gastos del patrono y que fueron trasladados a las personas trabajadoras.

Si ya antes de la crisis sanitaria de la COVID-19 los países tenían afectación para generar fuentes de empleo, con la crisis sanitaria, las posibilidades de procurar trabajo sufrieron una caída nunca pensada, entre las destacadas: a) cierre definitivo de empresas, b) suspensión de contratos laborales (vínculo laboral con un menor ingreso), c) reducción de las horas trabajadas y d) acuerdos unilaterales de reducción de salarios. Aunado a lo anterior, aquellas labores realizadas en el mercado informal que no son contabilizadas en las cuentas nacionales, también sufrieron una significativa contracción en perjuicio de las economías de cada país.

Por las razones expuestas, afrontar la crisis económica y social en las cuales la humanidad se encuentra inmersa \_no solamente por la COVID-19\_ es una responsabilidad de todos los sectores que participan en la sociedad. En esta perspectiva, es fundamental y necesario proponer soluciones desde la Economía Social y Solidaria (ESS). La ESS es una opción que orienta una posibilidad organizativa para que las personas puedan edificar una sociedad para todos y todas. La ESS como proyecto alternativo debe darse en medio de las luchas sociales y conflictos existentes. Cada lucha que se realice y cada acción que conquiste espacios para detener la destrucción del planeta son consecuentes con la posibilidad de una sociedad distinta.

La ESS como alternativa posible de articulación de los colectivos sociales y políticos, puede incidir en una agenda para proteger a la sociedad y la naturaleza de la destrucción paulatina llevada por el ser humano, mediante modelos económicos imaginarios que ocultan sus intenciones a través de la razón instrumental. La puesta a punto de la economía social, como forma de organización productiva, debe ser consciente de las implicaciones de su propósito filosófico; pero más aún, debe estar vigilante de no caer presa de la agenda de los procesos neopopulistas impulsados en el mundo.

En este contexto, la Revista Nacional de Administración, publica 12 contribuciones científicas que se enmarcaron en VIII Congreso Internacional de Investigadores en Economía Social del CIRIEC, que se realizó en el mes de setiembre de 2021 en San José, Costa Rica, coordinado por la Escuela de Ciencias de la Administración (ECA) de la UNED. Propuestas académicas que posibilitan comprender la ESS desde distintos posicionamientos teóricos en el devenir de la pandemia y pospandemia.

Adicionalmente, se publican dos artículos científicos de dos personas académicas de la UNED, uno de ellos con la temática de la Gestión del talento humano y otro artículo que reflexiona sobre las políticas cambiarias en Costa Rica 1960-2020.

Es necesario reconocer, por un lado, a las personas revisoras (par doble ciego) que, con su labor desinteresada en el proceso de arbitraje, contribuyen a elevar el nivel académico de la RNA y de la UNED; y, por otro lado, a la Editora Asociada María Teresa Franco Poveda, al Consejo Editorial, al Comité Científico Nacional e Internacional que con sus aportes brindan la solidez científica a la revista. Agradecimiento especial a las personas que participaron en la edición, diagramación, corrección de estilo, marcaje y traducción para que la RNA fuera publicada en el tiempo requerido.

Finalmente la RNA brinda un homenaje póstumo al doctor Raúl Canay Pazos (q.e.p.d), colega de la Universidad Santiago de Compostela, España, que, durante tres años, fue integrante del Consejo Editorial de la RNA.



Gustavo Hernández Castro  
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# ARTÍCULOS ACADÉMICOS



Revista Nacional  
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# Public-Private partnerships and their limiting factors for a sustainable public sewerage industry: A comparative analysis of three municipal cases in Japan



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## Asociaciones público-privadas y sus factores limitantes para una industria de alcantarillado público sostenible: un análisis comparativo de tres casos municipales en Japón

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### ABSTRACT:

This study focuses on the conditions for the implementation of the APP, in the form of a concession for the management of the sewerage business. Three uncertainties were identified as limiting factors for PPPs; a) level of service to ensure sustainability, aging of machinery and equipment; b) public spending on rain and the national government subsidy system; c) residents' perception of the water business and the provision of equitable services. The methodology includes case studies (cities of Hamamatsu, Osaka and Nara in Japan). It consists of two parts: a) analysis of relevant published materials and b) application of surveys and semi-structured interviews with municipal officials and, in the case of Osaka, an affiliated company established to operate the sewer business.

### RESUMEN:

Este estudio se centra en las condiciones para la implementación de la APP, en forma de concesión para la gestión del negocio de alcantarillado. Se identificaron tres incertidumbres como factores limitantes para las APP; a) nivel de servicio para asegurar la sostenibilidad, deterioro de maquinaria y equipo; b) gasto público en lluvia y sistema de subsidios del gobierno nacional; c) percepción de los residentes sobre el negocio del agua y la provisión de servicios equitativos. La metodología incluye estudios de casos (ciudades de Hamamatsu, Osaka y Nara en Japón). Consta de dos partes: a) análisis de materiales publicados relevantes y b) aplicación de encuestas y entrevistas semiestructuradas con funcionarios municipales y, en el caso de Osaka, una empresa afiliada establecida para operar el negocio de alcantarillado.

### RÉSUMÉ :

Cette étude se concentre sur les conditions de mise en œuvre du PPP, sous la forme d'une concession pour la gestion de l'entreprise d'assainissement. Trois incertitudes ont été identifiées comme des facteurs limitatifs pour les PPP ; a) niveau de service pour assurer la durabilité, détérioration des machines et des équipements ; b) dépenses publiques en pluie et système de subventions du gouvernement national ; c) perception par les résidents du commerce de l'eau et de la fourniture de services équitables. La méthodologie comprend des études de cas (villes de Hamamatsu, Osaka et Nara au Japon). Il se compose de deux parties : a) l'analyse des documents publiés pertinents et b) l'application d'enquêtes et d'entretiens semi-structurés avec des fonctionnaires municipaux et, dans le cas d'Osaka, une société affiliée établie pour gérer l'entreprise d'assainissement.

### RESUMO:

Este estudo tem como foco as condições de implantação da APP, na forma de concessão para a gestão do negócio de esgotamento sanitário. Três incertezas foram identificadas como fatores limitantes para as PPPs; a) nível de serviço para garantir a sustentabilidade, deterioração de máquinas e equipamentos; b) gastos públicos em chuva e sistema de subsídios do governo nacional; c) A percepção dos residentes sobre o negócio da água e a prestação de serviços equitativos. A metodologia inclui estudos de caso (cidades de Hamamatsu, Osaka e Nara no Japão). Consiste em duas partes: a) análise de materiais publicados relevantes e b) aplicação de enquetes e entrevistas semiestructuradas com funcionários municipais e, no caso de Osaka, uma empresa afiliada estabelecida para operar o negócio da rede de esgotamento sanitário.

### KEYWORDS:

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS, CONCESSION, PUBLICLY OWNED ENTERPRISES

### PALABRAS CLAVE:

ASOCIACIONES PÚBLICO-PRIVADAS, CONCESIÓN, EMPRESAS DE PROPIEDAD PÚBLICA.

### MOTS-CLÉS :

PARTENARIATS PUBLIC-PRIVÉ, CONCESSION, ENTREPRISES PUBLIQUES.

### PALAVRAS-CHAVE:

PARCERIAS PÚBLICO-PRIVADAS, CONCESSÃO, EMPRESAS IMÓVEIS PÚBLICAS.





## INTRODUCTION

Water is an indispensable resource for humans, and water services need to be developed by prioritizing the public interest from a long-term perspective (Koppenjan & Enserink, 2009). Historical experience shows that there are at least three models of water provision in practice: public, private, and community models. The public model is dominant in water services, but privatization and public-private partnerships (PPPs) have been introduced to increase efficiency.

Since the mid-1980s, liberalization has led to numerous water industry reforms, allowing for more privatized and commercialized services, thereby initiating the economic globalization process (Bakker, 2003, 2007; Swyngedouw *et al.*, 2002). Municipalities are compelled to make trade-offs between environmental and social sustainability and economic sustainability. Thus, utilities may circumvent contradictions by finding creative solutions to operate within regulations, service delivery models, and municipalities (Furlong, 2012; Furlong & Bakker, 2010).

Monopolistic tendencies are the principal concern in privatization, as these may limit water access for low-income citizens and result in a lack of investment for improving water quality (Cesar, 2019). Some countries, such as the United Kingdom and France, find there are benefits of market competition over public monopoly. In other countries, such as Germany, municipalities create hybrid public/private firms that benefit from both market engagement and economies of scale available under monopoly production. Differences in national traditions of public intervention, institutional arrangements, and public service markets make local public services an area of great diversity (Warner & Bel, 2008).

In Japan, the public water business has been managed in the form of a “local public enterprise”. It is a part of the local government but corporate accounting has been introduced to ensure management efficiency, and it has been financed by issuing corporate bonds. Despite these reforms, a decrease in population and deterioration of existing facilities and equipment has increased the momentum for further public water administrative reform. From the classification for the resource management reforms in the water sector discussed by Bakker (2007), the public water business reform in Japan continues to exhibit the organizational reform of corporatization under asset management via private sector partnership for more efficient management (Fujiwara, 2020). However, there is little research on private sector participation in the public sewerage business or analysis of a management and governance model for a sustainable sewerage industry. This study aims to fill these gaps in the research by analyzing reforms of the public sewerage businesses of three Japanese cities based on textual analysis and interview surveys.

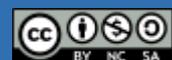
## METHODS

The research methods included scrutinizing preliminary research and conducting comparative case studies of three municipal sewerage business reforms in Hamamatsu, Osaka, and Nara cities of Japan. These three cities are the most advanced municipalities in Japan’s public sewerage business in terms of reforming their businesses through PPPs. This study consisted of two parts. First, we performed a textual analysis of relevant materials published by the national and municipal governments and the proceedings of local councils. Second, we conducted semi-structured interview surveys with officers of the municipalities and, in the case of Osaka, an affiliated company established to operate the sewerage business. These interviews were conducted during four periods from 2018 to 2021, with a total of 10 executives and other staff members.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

### Case study 1: Hamamatsu City Government

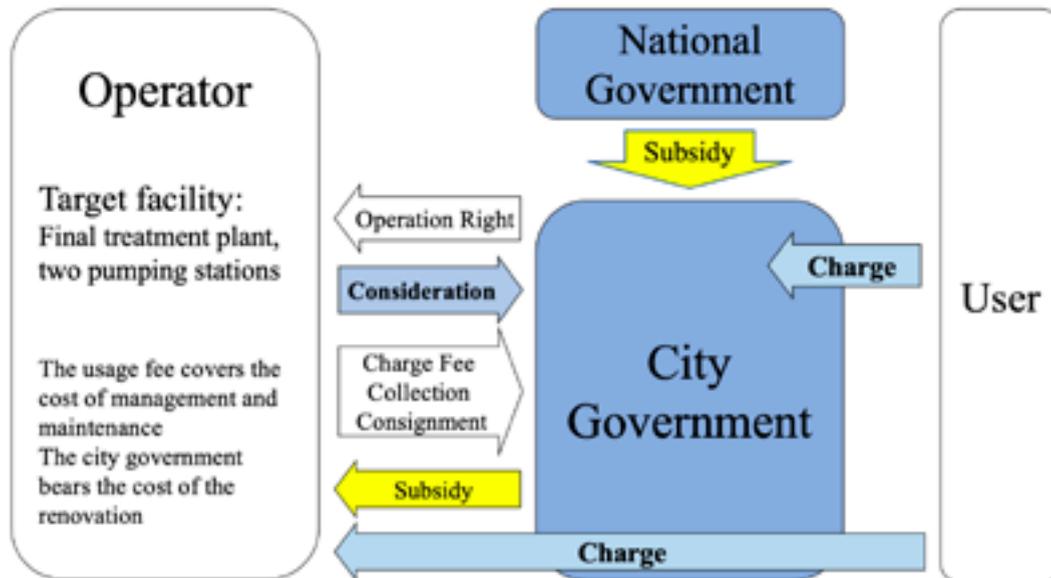
The city of Hamamatsu has an area of 1,558.04 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of approximately 800,000. It is located between Tokyo and Osaka, both of which are the most densely populated areas of Japan. Hamamatsu is a transportation hub that connects the east and west of Honshu island through high-speed trains and highways. It is an industrial city where the three major industries of textiles, musical instruments, and motorcycles have developed. Hamamatsu City Government (HCG) was the first city in Japan to begin operating sewerage facilities by the concession method from April 2018. A huge expansion of the sewerage treatment area in Hamamatsu city owing to a 2005 merger of cities and towns triggered the business reform. The newly transferred Seien area was the largest treatment area in the city, accounting for approximately 50-70 % of the entire city by both area and sewage treatment amount.



Up to then, about 70 people had operated these facilities, of which 50 were outsourced to the private sector for maintenance, and the remaining 20 people were prefectural government staff and public corporation employees in charge of the construction design, operation management supervision, and budget and contract work.<sup>1</sup>

The HCG decided to introduce the concession method for the management of the terminal treatment plant and the pumping station, based on the cost reduction effect and the advantages of restricting an increase in staff. Except for the renovation of facilities (90 % of the cost is borne by the city), the management of the target facilities is entirely entrusted to the owner of the operating right (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Scheme of sewerage business concession for Hamamatsu city**



Source: Adapted by the author from Hamamatsu City Government (2017, p. 10).

After announcing the concession, the HCG started an open call for proposals in May 2016, and selected a consortium of five companies, Veolia, JFE Engineering, ORIX, Tokyu Construction, and Suyama Construction Group, in March 2017. In October 2017, the HCG signed a 20-year concession contract with the joint venture established by the consortium, Hamamatsu Water Symphony Co., Ltd. The concession was estimated to reduce the project cost by 14.4 % (8.66 billion yen) by converting the total planned project cost of the direct management and concession method over the project period into present value. In addition, the HCG expected to earn 2.5 billion yen from the company in compensation for the operating right. There are five expected advantages of introducing this concession: reduction of electricity costs by long-term procurement and introduction of new technology; reduction of utility costs, such as chemical costs by global procurement; reduction of repair and inspection costs by in-house production and specification changes; education and training by skilled technical staff; and an increase in regular employees.<sup>2</sup>

1 Hamamatsu City Government, Nihonhatsu Hamamatsu-shi no Gesuido Uneitakuoshiki no Genjyo nitsuite [The Current Situation of Japan's First Sewerage Operation Consignment Method in Hamamatsu City] (2020). <https://www.mlit.go.jp/mizukokudo/seweraage/content/001377290.pdf> (Accessed May 31, 2021)

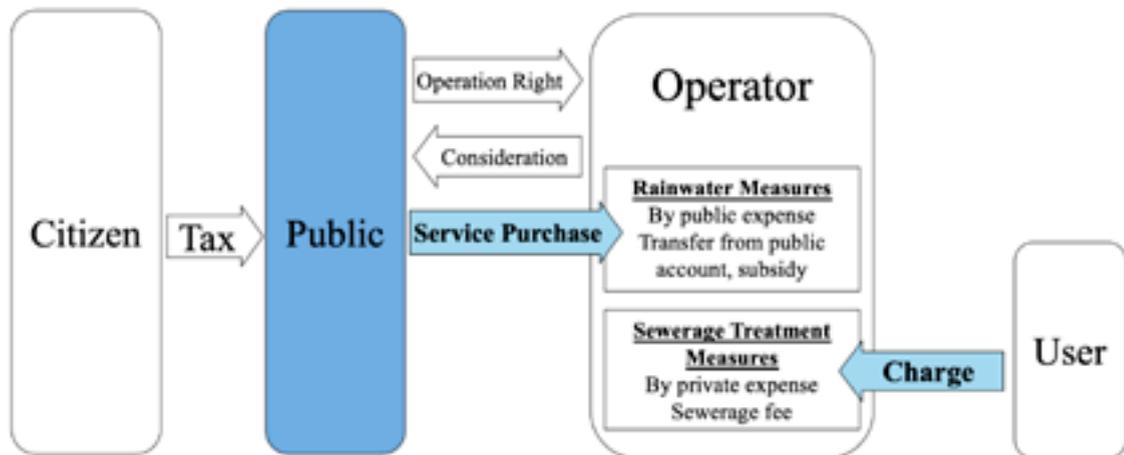
2 Nara City Government, *Nara-shi niokeru Kanminrenkeijigyo no Torikumijyokyo nitsuite* [The Status of Public-Private Partnership Projects in Nara City] (2018). <https://www.mlit.go.jp/common/001259218.pdf> (Accessed May 31, 2021).

## Case study 2: Osaka City Government

Osaka is the central city of the Kansai region in western Japan, which is the second most populous area after Tokyo. Approximately 2.75 million people live in an area of 225 km<sup>2</sup> of Osaka. The purpose of the organizational reform of Osaka's sewerage business consists of the following six points: First, the reform aims to maintain high-level citizen services, securing high-quality technology, accumulating new know-how, and acquiring the skills and know-how of the staff engaged in the sewerage business. Second, the reform seeks to implement project and business development through joint ventures with the private sector, which is difficult for public bodies. Third, the reform aims to implement water drainage and improve the combined sewer system at considerable time and cost to secure citizens' safety. Fourth, the reform seeks to improve the efficiency of the business under an increasingly severe operating environment owing to the huge required renewal of treatment and sewerage facilities, despite the decreasing trend of water consumption and revenue. Fifth, the reform aims to review the number of maintenance department staff, as they comprise a larger proportion than in other cities. Sixth, the reform is a response to the demand for sewer engineers and technicians. In other cities, proper sewerage business management has become challenging owing to the lack of workers trained in these jobs.

The Osaka City Government (OCG) aims to introduce a "mixed operation rights system" as the final organizational form of the sewerage business. This system is a vertical separation system in which local governments own facilities and private companies carry out business operations as well as a part of capital investment, such as renewal of facilities financed by private companies' finances. For facilities throughout the city area, the sewerage business is entrusted to outside organizations except for new construction, such as large-scale remodeling and reinvention, which requires policy approval. The contract period is assumed to be 20-30 years. As Figure 2 shows, the owner of the operation right implements its business with the service purchase compensation (public expense) paid from the public sector and charges from service users (private expense).

Figure 2. Model of a mixed operation rights system for Osaka city



Source: Adapted by the author from Osaka City Government (2015, p. 57).

For the expected schedule of this organizational transformation, three steps are assumed for the transition of organizational reform (Table 1). Phase 1 involves comprehensive outsourcing, carried out on the operation and maintenance of sewerage facilities by the Urban Technology Center, an affiliated association of the OCG. In phase 2, the current stage, in addition to the comprehensive outsourcing of operations and maintenance, small, simple renewals will be implemented by the newly established city-owned enterprise. Finally, in phase 3, a mixed operation rights system will be introduced, and a range of facility renewals and refurbishments necessary for operation will be implemented.

**Table 1. Steps for management reform of Osaka’s public sewerage business**

Business Area	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
<b>Business Area A</b> Public Administrative Specific Works	<b>Public:</b> Organized work related to comprehensive business development Operations involving the exercise of public authority based on the sewerage law		
<b>Business Area B</b> Construction	<b>Public:</b> New construction for anti-flood, combined sewerage improvement Large-scale update and renovation works		
<b>Business Area C</b> Operation and Maintenance	<b>Private:</b> Comprehensive outsourcing	<b>Private:</b> Comprehensive outsourcing Small simple renewal works	<b>Private:</b> <b>Mixed operation right system</b> Contract term 20–30 years
<b>Expected Effects of Business operations</b>	Reduction of maintenance costs		
	Revenue growth from domestic and overseas business development		
	Reduced construction costs		
<b>Contracted Party</b>	Affiliated general incorporated association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New entity (stock company)</li> <li>100% owned by city government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stock company</li> <li>A part of the share is owned by private company</li> </ul>

Source: Osaka City Government (2015, p. 67), modified by the author.

**Table 2. Conditions of Osaka City Council for the sewerage business organizational reform budget**

Maintain current service level	For outsourcing the sewerage business operation to a newly established company, the city must sufficiently supervise the company not only to make the management more efficient but also to acquire the knowledge and technology of the present staff.
Secure a crisis management response system	The city must ensure that the safety and security of the citizens are maintained, fully considering crisis management, including disasters.
Reduce costs by private management method	With the establishment of a stock company, it is necessary to consider the introduction of a more effective performance procurement system and take measures to reduce the burden on citizens.
Accountability and information disclosure	It is necessary to report the business plan to the City Council immediately after the establishment of the corporation.
Thorough consideration of and accountability in promoting reform	The operating power system must be carefully examined, providing polite and sufficient explanations to Parliament.

Source: By author sourced from Osaka City Council. *Gian Dai 130 Go Heisei 28 Nen Osakashi Gesuido Gigyo Kaikei Yosan nitaisuru Futai Ketsugi* [Incidental resolution for Bill 130, 2016 Osaka City Sewerage Business account budget]. Retrieved from <https://www.city.osaka.lg.jp/shikai/page/0000349891.html> (Accessed May 17, 2021).

In the Osaka city sewerage business budget in March 2016, the Osaka City Council stated that the city was responsible for the sewerage business, supervising it to protect citizens' safety, and ensuring that it would be more efficient and sustainable for the future. Moreover, the council announced five resolutions on budget execution concerning the sewerage business organizational reform (Table 2). Thereafter, the Clearwater OSAKA Corporation was established on July 1, 2016, and operations started on April 1, 2017.

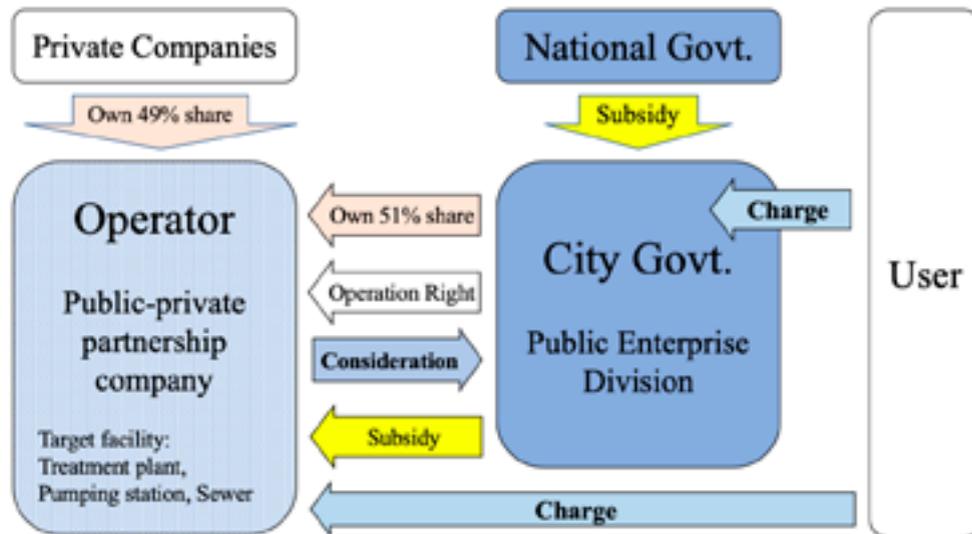
### Case study 3: Nara City Government

Nara city is located 30 km east of Osaka city, covering an area of 276.94 km<sup>2</sup> and with a population of approximately 360,000. It is an historical region, with Nara being the capital of ancient Japan 1,300 years ago. The Nara City Government (NCG) identified the following four problems with the city's water and sewerage business. First, there is an increased need for renewal due to aging facilities; second, revenue has decreased owing to the declining population, especially in the eastern region; and third, there is a shortage of professional technical staff and difficulty recruiting new and mid-career staff (Tsuji, 2017).

The NCG considered introducing a concession system that is not a pure business consignment but instead chose to promote facility renovation and flexibly encourage the vitality of the private sector, yet guaranteeing publicity and accessibility rather than completely leaving it to the private sector. In this scheme, a PPP company is established as a concession-type trustee; the city invests 51 % and seeks investment for the rest by private companies. The NCG controls the management of the new company and secures technology succession both by dispatching staff from the NCG Public Enterprise Division and by utilizing the technology of the private partners.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Nara City Government, Kanmin Renkei Konsesshon no Torikumi [Public-Private Partnership Concession Initiatives] (2018). <https://www.mhlw.go.jp/file/06-Seisakujouhou-10900000-Kenkoukyoku/0000194563.pdf> (Accessed May 31, 2021).

Figure 3. Scheme of Sewerage Business Concession for Nara city



Source: Adapted by the author from Nara City Government (2017, p. 13).

The concession scheme for the NCG is shown in Figure 3. The contract period is expected to be 15 years, and only the operating right will be held by the private sector, while the facility will be owned by the NCG. About half of the PPP companies' staff are expected to be dispatched from the NCG. New investments in business operations will be implemented by the company.

In this way, the NCG has been preparing to introduce a concession, although the draft ordinance for introducing it was rejected by the city council in March 2016. The city council criticized the draft as follows.

*Water and sewerage are important infrastructure facilities in daily life and should be treated equally in a city-wide plan. There are still many issues to be solved, such as the fact that only a part of Nara city is the target area, and that the proposal is too sudden, and that understanding has not yet spread (Liberal Democratic Party).*

*The area plays the role of the city's water source pond. Local residents have made efforts to protect water sources, and complained that privatization is turning their backs on this effort and letting the city abandon the area (Communist Party).*

*This privatization is a sudden proposal, and there is a lack of explanation for the relevant areas, so it cannot be said that the residents have fully understood it. A polite explanation of the relevant areas and the overall picture of the plan should be given, and the ordinance should be proposed only after the understanding and cooperation of the residents (Nara Mirai no Kai [Nara Future Association]).*

After the rejection of the draft concession ordinance, the NCG introduced a comprehensive business consignment for the water and sewerage business for 2.5 years from October 1, 2018. The NCG is examining whether to grant a concession to the joint company that has been entrusted with the consignment, Nara City Sewerage Service, which consists of six private companies. The contents of the comprehensive consignment work are general management of water and sewerage; terminal treatment plant operation management; planned maintenance work, such as patrol/inspection, resident/accident response, sewer inspection/cleaning, emergency/disaster response, sewerage treatment plant and pumping station renovation design and construction, and minor maintenance work. the envisaged cost is about 555 million yen.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Nara City Government, Kanmin Renkei Konsesshon no Torikumi [Public-Private Partnership Concession Initiatives](2018). <https://www.mhlw.go.jp/file/06-Seisakujouhou-10900000-Kenkoukyoku/0000194563.pdf> (Accessed May 31, 2021).

## DISCUSSION

This section compares the cases of sewerage business reforms in the three local governments based on the interview survey, and examines the conditions under which PPPs for sewerage business reforms can create a sustainable sewerage industry. As shown in Table 3, the balance sheets of all three municipalities discussed in this study are expected to deteriorate in the future owing to their declining populations and aging facilities, and the momentum for improving management efficiency has increased. The reforms in Hamamatsu and Nara cities were triggered by the 2005 merger of cities, towns, and villages, but in the case of Osaka city, there is a more positive reason, namely, awareness of the business opportunities for wide-area expansion of public sewerage projects. Osaka and Nara city governments have tried to introduce a concession, but have not yet obtained the consensus of the local government council.

**Table 3. Comparison of three local governments' sewerage business reform**

Municipality	Hamamatsu city	Osaka city (phase 2)	Nara city (after the concession ordinance was rejected)
Motivation for reform	Area expansion due to merger of cities, towns, and villages Need for new personnel and efficiency	Wide-area business opportunity	Deterioration of future income and expenditure Lack of staff
Entrusted business content	Narrow (treatment plant/pumping station operation management)	Wide (treatment plant/pumping station operation management)	Wide (treatment plant/pumping station operation management, sewerage maintenance)
Target area	Partial areas (50-60 %)	All city areas	Partial areas (3 %)
Contract period	20 years	5 years	2.5 years
Entrusted organization	5 private companies form a joint venture	Municipally owned enterprise	Municipal and private joint company (city owns 51 %)
Effect amount (within contract period)	8.6 billion yen	5.5 billion yen	n.d.
Degree of aging facilities	Medium	High	High
Stormwater and sewage classification	Clarified	Unclear (combined sewerage)	Clarified
Predictability of renovation and renewal costs	High (relatively clear amount of renovation and renewal required in the future)	Low (aging facilities/heavy rain countermeasure costs)	Medium (aging facilities)
Future prospect	Concession verification	Concession introduction	Concession introduction

Source: By author.

The following four factors are obtained from the comparative analysis as reasons for Hamamatsu being the only city to introduce a concession. First, the scope of work targeted for the Hamamatsu concession was limited to the treatment plant and pumping station. Second, there are few aging facilities in areas where concessions were introduced, and it was easy to calculate the long-term estimate of the cost of future renovations and renewals subsidized by taxes. Third, the Hamamatsu city management did not implement reform of the water supply business, since users have a stricter perspective on privatizing drinking water. Reform of only sewerage management is more likely to be acceptable to users than its reform with water supply. Fourth, the Hamamatsu concession was introduced in the newly merged area, which had been operated by a wide-area public administrative body until then, and thus, did not have a sense of community with the rest of Hamamatsu city.

Based on these considerations, the limiting factors of Japan's reform of its public sewerage business management can be summarized by the following five points, as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4. Limiting factors in the reform of public sewerage business management**

Ensuring redundancy	Uncertainty in heavy rain and earthquake countermeasures Larger risk of facility operation and maintenance compared to Europe and the United States Sewerage business environment
Aging machinery and equipment	Uncertainty in repair amounts and related expenses Operation based on the experience of skilled staff Facilities that are aging and have exceeded their duration
Compensation from taxes	Uncertainty in the amount and period of subsidies from the national government Rain water treatment by public water, especially in urban combined sewers National subsidy for facility development for heavy rain countermeasures
Integration with water business reform	The impact of greater resistance to water business reform Refusal to privatize drinking water
Equal service and accessibility	A sense of inequality between areas where public-private partnerships have been introduced and areas where they have not

Source: By author.

The first factor limiting reform of the sewerage business is the uncertainty of the investment required for heavy rain and earthquake countermeasures. A characteristic of Japan's climate is that it is required to respond to earthquakes and heavy rains that exceed mechanical equipment capacity in peacetime more than Western countries are. When considering reforms of Japan's public sewerage business, water and sewerage facilities need to be resilient, and redundancy is required to withstand natural disasters. Moreover, due to growing interest in environmental changes caused by global warming, severe weather events, such as typhoons and heavy rains, have attracted greater attention from the public. New capital investment is required to strengthen the capacity of sewerage systems, especially in densely populated urban areas.

In addition, in the event of an emergency, the local government, which is the facility owner, can mobilize the maximum amount of resources (Hart, 2003). There is also criticism that know-how will be lost if significant outsourcing is undertaken. With the growing awareness of disaster prevention and mitigation, municipalities are expected to mobilize maximum resources in an emergency.

A second limiting factor is the aging of machinery and equipment, the degree of which varies by device. Many municipalities operate machinery and equipment beyond the endurance year based on the know-how of veteran staff. This is a risk that even operating municipalities cannot estimate. At the introduction of a concession, the contracted company is more sensitive to this risk to the local government and has high motivation for to undertake regular planned maintenance with updates after a certain period, instead of fixing simply when a problem occurs. This raises the costs of construction investment spending.

Third, in Japan, under the principle that rainwater treatment is a public expense, local government taxes are used as a source of funds, and about half of the construction cost of sewerage facilities for rainwater is subsidized by the central government. This is a customary, yet unstable fiscal policy. It acts as a hindrance to long-term PPP contracts



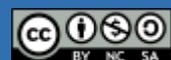
of more than 10 years. Fourth, there is deep opposition, including emotional opposition, to integration of water supply business reform with sewerage business reform, including the introduction of PPPs as privatization of the water supply business. Fifth, from the perspective of providing equal services and accessibility, citizens may oppose the introduction of PPPs in only a part of city areas.

## CONCLUSION

We derive the following policy implications related to further administrative changes in the public sewerage business in the future. In this study, we focused on the conditions for introducing a PPP approach, especially in the form of a concession to manage the sewerage business. We identified three uncertainties as limiting factors for PPPs. The first is uncertainty over the service level for ensuring sustainability and the aging of machinery and equipment; the second is uncertainty over the principle of rainwater public expenditure and the national government's subsidy system; and the third is uncertainty by residents about the relevance of the water business and the provision of equal services.

In Asia, the prevalence of managing publicly owned enterprises with capital participation by private companies is increasing (Jensen, 2017). Furthermore, aggressive corporate development of publicly owned enterprises and their expansion outside their regions are increasing with the advancement of urban entrepreneurialism (Tremml, 2019). In Japan, where disaster risk is higher than in Western countries, sewerage projects are required to have higher redundancy, and higher public commitment is required than in other countries.

Although significant private consignment and privatization are difficult in Japan, it is realistic to provide services by public or publicly owned enterprises. Further improvement in management efficiency is expected through competition among publicly owned enterprises to expand their jurisdictions. The national government is required to support the establishment of such publicly owned enterprises and to develop a transparent and stable subsidy system over the long term. As future research, we would like to undertake a comparative analysis of the governance of sewerage business management by publicly owned enterprises in Japan with overseas cases.



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## Economía social y solidaria y acceso a los alimentos: perspectivas de Camerún

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### ABSTRACT:

The social and solidarity economy has an increasingly important role in the issue of access to food. This article examines food solidarity in various low-income communities in Cameroon. In the foreground is a nuanced perspective on food distribution practices in the country; such practices allow the low-income population to have access to food. The methodology is qualitative; Interviews were conducted with the participants in English, French, and Pidgin. To facilitate the disclosure of information, it was clarified that the data provided will be anonymous (pseudonyms are used). In addition, for confidentiality reasons, no information that could reveal the identity of the participants is disclosed.

### RESUMEN:

La economía social y solidaria tiene un papel cada vez más importante en el tema del acceso a la alimentación. Este artículo examina la solidaridad alimentaria en varias comunidades de bajos ingresos en Camerún. En primer plano se encuentra una perspectiva matizada sobre las prácticas de distribución de alimentos en el país; tales prácticas permiten que la población de bajos ingresos tenga acceso a los alimentos. La metodología es cualitativa; Las entrevistas se llevaron a cabo con los participantes en inglés, francés y pidgin. Para facilitar la divulgación de información, se aclaró que los datos proporcionados serán anónimos (se utilizan seudónimos). Además, por razones de confidencialidad, no se divulga información que pueda revelar la identidad de los participantes.

### RÉSUMÉ

L'économie social et solidaire joue un rôle de plus en plus important dans le domaine de l'accès à l'alimentation. Cet article examine la solidarité alimentaire dans plusieurs communautés à faible revenu au Cameroun. Au premier plan se trouve une perspective nuancée sur les pratiques de distribution alimentaire dans le pays ; de telles pratiques permettent aux populations à faible revenu d'avoir accès à la nourriture. La méthodologie est qualitative ; les entretiens ont eu lieu avec les participants en anglais, français et Pidgin. Pour faciliter la divulgation d'informations, il a été précisé que les données fournies seront anonymes (pseudonymes utilisés). En outre, pour des raisons de confidentialité, aucune information susceptible de révéler l'identité des participants n'est divulguée.

### RESUMO:

A economia social e solidária desempenha um papel cada vez mais importante na questão do acesso à alimentação. Este artigo examina a solidariedade alimentar em várias comunidades de baixa renda em Camarões. Em primeiro plano encontra-se uma perspectiva matizada sobre as práticas de distribuição de alimentos no país; tais práticas permitem que a população de baixa renda tenha acesso aos alimentos. A metodologia é qualitativa; As entrevistas foram realizadas com os participantes em inglês, francês e pidgin. Para facilitar a divulgação das informações, foi esclarecido que os dados fornecidos serão anônimos (são utilizados pseudônimos). Além disso, por motivos de sigilo, não são divulgadas informações que possam revelar a identidade dos participantes.

### KEYWORDS:

FOOD SOLIDARITY; FOOD DISTRIBUTION; SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS; SELF-MANAGED DEVELOPMENT

### PALABRAS CLAVES:

SOLIDARIDAD ALIMENTARIA; DISTRIBUCION DE COMIDA; RELACIONES SOCIALES; DESARROLLO AUTOGESTIÓN.

### MOTS-CLÉS:

SOLIDARITÉ ALIMENTAIRE, DISTRIBUTION DE NOURRITURE, RELATIONS SOCIALES, DÉVELOPPPEMENT AUTOGESTION.

### PALAVRAS-CHAVE:

SOLIDARIEDADE ALIMENTAR; DISTRIBUIÇÃO DE ALIMENTOS; RELAÇÕES SOCIAIS; DESENVOLVIMENTO DE AUTO-GESTÃO.



## INTRODUCTION

The social and solidarity economy (SSE) has become a viable alternative to the neoliberal economic model, as it balances economic, social, and environmental objectives. The SSE recognises humankind not just as producers of economic wealth but also as co-owners of material wealth and co-users of natural resources, and as being co-responsible for the conservation of nature (Nembhard, 2020; Nembhard, 2014). Hence, people should strive to produce and share material wealth among all in order to generate sustainable conditions for the self-managed development of each and every member of society and the planet (Defourny *et al.*, 2009; McMurtry, 2009; Mendell & Neamtan, 2010; Utting, 2015; Veltmeyer, 2018).

The social and solidarity economy is increasingly playing an important role with respect to access to food, and here lies the focus of this paper. More precisely, this paper examines food solidarity in various low-income communities in Cameroon. I bring to the fore a nuanced perspective on food-sharing practices in the country, and argue that these practices thereby enable the low-income population there to have access to food.

The remainder of this paper is organised as follows. Section 2 sheds light on the conceptual framework, with Section 3 providing a contextual background to the study. Section 4 describes the method used in the paper, Section 5 presents and discusses the findings, and concluding remarks are provided in Section 6.

### Conceptualising the Social and Solidarity Economy

The social and solidarity economy comprises a set of theories and practices that advocate for a more democratic, fair, and sustainable society (Loh & Shear, 2015). It aspires to be “a socio-economic order and new way of life that deliberately chooses serving the needs of people and ecological sustainability as the goal of economic activity rather than maximization of profits under the unfettered rule of the market” (Quiñones, 2008, p. 13). The SSE frames its economic vision by taking into consideration the diverse ways that people meet their everyday material needs and care for one another (Gibson-Graham, 2006; McLaren & Agyeman, 2015). Hence, the economy is intimately connected to social relations (Loh and Agyeman, 2019).

The work of Karl Polanyi is critical to the conceptualisation of the SSE. In *The Great Transformation*, Polanyi (2001) made the compelling point that earlier economies were embedded in the social sphere, and thus that social relations and structures were pivotal to their functioning. The ‘social’ principle espoused by Polanyi is fundamental to understanding the SSE, and he argued that other systems —reciprocity (involving symmetrical movements beyond a dual relationship), redistribution (involving movements from a central position), and householding (involving ‘production for one’s one use’)— functioned before the dominance of the current market system (Polanyi, 2001, p. 55). Furthermore, Servet (2007) took the position that reciprocity goes beyond mere transaction in that it also entails complementary relationships premised on voluntary interdependence.

Arguably, the concept of the SSE is strongly associated with this conception of reciprocity, as actors in an SSE depend on one another to meet diverse needs, and their relationships are voluntary. Moreover, the concept of reciprocity carries a positive connotation of co-operation (Servet, 2007; Hillenkamp, 2013), which is evident in SSEs, since actors work co-operatively for both communal and societal benefit. In other words, emphasis is not placed on achieving material gain, and the various systems interact with one another in order to meet a variety of needs. For instance, some fair trade enterprises function based on the principle of reciprocity, but they can also make use of ‘redistribution’ in the form of support from the state (Sahakian & Dunand, 2015). In a nutshell, Polanyi (2001) highlighted the plurality of economic principles, and these principles are manifested in SSEs.

Attempts have also been made to define the ‘solidarity economy’, but like the term ‘social economy’, there is no universally accepted definition. Laville (1992) defined the solidarity economy (*économie solidaire* in French) as a new generation of social economy with a plurality of forms of economic activities. A widely-used definition is that provided by Alliance 21 (2001), the group which convened the Working Group on the Solidarity Economy, which reads:

Solidarity economy designates all production, distribution and consumption activities that contribute to the democratization of the economy based on citizen commitments both at a local and global level [...] It covers different forms of organization that the population uses to create its own means of work or to have access to qualitative goods and services, in a dynamic of reciprocity and solidarity which links individual interests to the collective interest. (p. 11)

This definition highlights the argument that the solidarity economy is not confined to a particular sector of the economy, as it cuts across different sectors. Emphasis is placed on certain values and priorities such as co-operation, equality, sustainability, democracy, diversity, justice, and local control (Allard & Matthaëi, 2008). Through this prism, it seems obvious that the 'social economy' and 'solidarity economy' have a lot in common. It is, therefore, unsurprising that increasingly, scholars and practitioners are using the term 'social and solidarity economy', which denotes the blending of elements from 'social economy' and 'solidarity economy'. According to Bateman (2015), the SSE might be viewed as 'an economic model that is stable, equitable, dignified, environmentally-sustainable and democratic or participative' (p. 150).

Clearly, SSE organisations and initiatives are diverse, yet in spite of this, they all focus on social welfare, co-operation, solidarity, ethics, and democratic self-management (Utting *et al.*, 2014). Operating methods based on the solidarity principle aim to include rather than exclude, and goals are not limited to accumulating capital or generating profits but also to using resources to achieve objectives that will benefit the initiators as well as the workers and beneficiaries (Fonteneau *et al.*, 2011). Achieving objectives also includes meeting the legitimate needs of all and shunning forms of consumerism that destroy nature and objectify social relationships (North & Cato, 2017).

An SSE includes co-operatives, community-development trusts, mutual-benefit societies, worker-managed enterprises, and various forms of solidarity finance such as complementary currencies, rotating savings and credit associations, accumulative saving and credit associations, as well as social enterprises, fair trade networks, sharing schemes and associations, and community-based organisations. SSEs also incorporate practices such as the self-management of urban services by residents, networks of knowledge exchange, self-production, sustainable agriculture, organic produce channels, development of new activities by unemployed people, women's inter-cultural restaurants, collective kitchens, and other forms of collective enterprise (Eme & Laville, 2006). Diversity and plurality are highlighted in all these organisations and initiatives (Gismondi *et al.*, 2016; Laville, 2015; Lewis & Conaty, 2012; Ojong, 2015).

The social and solidarity economy has been particularly vital in food movements. Food justice and sovereignty movements have been leading the challenge to the dominant food economy, which is based on corporate control of global industrialised production and informed by "free market principles" (McClintock, 2014; Holt, 2011; Agyeman & McEntee, 2014; Holt & Shattuck, 2011). In fact, these movements have championed solidarity approaches with respect to repossessing land, promoting fair trade networks, and creating cooperative organisations (Loh & Agyeman, 2019).

## Contextual background

Cameroon, with its history of colonial control by Germany, Britain, and France, and with English and French as its two official languages, has a population of about 25 million. According to the country's National Institute of Statistics (NIS) (2015), about 37.5 % of the population lives below the national poverty line of 931 FCFA (US\$ 1.5) per day. The World Bank (2021) notes that the number of poor people in Cameroon actually increased by 12 % between 2007 and 2014, to about 8 million. Unemployment among those aged between 15 and 35 is about 13 %, but crucially, underemployment is 71.9 % at the national level, and 54.4 % and 79.2 % in urban and rural zones respectively (AfDB, 2012). Informal employment stands at 88.6 % (NIS, 2015b).

A significant proportion of the population has experienced a long period of economic hardship, and for this segment of the population, the food question is a top priority. In January 2008, prices of basic commodities in the country were on average 40 % higher than in the previous four months (Amin, 2012), leading to violent riots in major cities, with 24-100 people reportedly killed (Berazneva & Lee, 2013). According to the United Nations, there was significant increase in food insecurity between 2013 and 2016, with 2.6 million people in the country being food-insecure in 2017, increasing to 3.9 million in 2018 (WFP, 2018). Food insecurity in Cameroon is common among smallholder farmers and most rain-fed dependent communities (Mbuli *et al.*, 2021).

## METHODOLOGY

The nature of the research required a qualitative approach, and for that reason I conducted interviews. The research participants were proficient in either English, French, and/or Pidgin. A translator was not needed due to my knowledge of these languages. To facilitate disclosure of information, it was made clear that any information provided would not be passed on to any third party and would be anonymised. Hence, pseudonyms are used in this paper. Also, for confidentiality purposes, I do not disclose any information which might reveal the identity of the participants.

The study was conducted in four administrative regions (formerly provinces) in the country —the Northwest, Southwest, Littoral, and Central. More precisely, the research sites in the Northwest Region were Bamenda, Bafut, Belo, Fundong, Fungom, and Wum, while Buea was the research zone in the Southwest Region. Finally, Douala and Yaoundé were the research sites in the Littoral and Central regions, respectively. Some of these research sites are classified as urban areas, while others are rural communities.

Interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder, and I took notes by hand. The audio-recordings were transcribed, and interviews conducted in French and Pidgin were translated into English and coded using NVIVO.

Participants were engaged in agriculture (the cultivation of yams, maize, vegetables, beans, plantains, coffee, ginger, plantains, groundnuts); beekeeping; fishkeeping; goat, pig, and poultry farming; petty trading (e.g., the sale of roasted fish and plantains, cigarettes, sugar, biscuits, firewood, gasoline, fresh fish, corn beer, etc.); mobile street food vending; operating motorbike taxis and mobile phone booths; selling crushed stones; tailoring; and the sale of and second-hand clothes, footwear, body lotion, kitchen utensils, bedsheets and covers, etc.

## THE DYNAMICS OF FOOD SOLIDARITY IN CAMEROON

In several communities in Cameroon, food-sharing symbolises conviviality and harmonious co-existence. In other words, it conjures up positive images of community. In rural communities in particular, sharing food or inviting friends and neighbours to share a meal is a normal everyday practice. As explained by Akenji:

I don't enjoy having a meal alone; I like to invite my friends to come over for a meal. I'm not so happy when I'm having a meal without my friends. I ask them to join me to share a meal so that we can be chatting as we eat ... I do not share food with others because I expect them to act in the same way. If I go to a person's house and food is offered to me, I will eat; if food is not offered, that's fine.

The key point here is that food-sharing is not always about survival, it is also about living as a community. This explains why Akenji said that he does not share food because he expects to get food from others when in need. Food-sharing displays a spirit of togetherness, which is an integral part of the SSE.

Crucially, in rural communities in particular, food-sharing enables people to meet personal goals, in this case, sociability. Akenji, as mentioned earlier, invited his friends to share his food with them so that they could chat over the meal. By having a discussion over food, Akenji satisfies his need for sociability. The point I'm emphasising here is that even low-income individuals do not always pursue economic goals, and at times they place more emphasis on pursuing non-economic goals, which is quite different from the capitalocentric notions of economy. Spending time with others enabled Akenji to meet a social need. In other words, meeting social goals is equally as important as meeting economic ones.

In urban areas, food-sharing is part of the low-income population's interdependent lifestyle and ensures that they have access to food. As explained by Lucy, a slum resident in Yaoundé:

In the beginning of the month, when I have money, I stock up food, so everything goes on well. By mid-month, like most people in my community, I don't have money; I just have to survive. During this period, when a person is cooking, about five neighbours would tell the person that their plates are ready. Sometimes we [i.e. people in the neighbourhood] come together to cook food. A person may bring rice, another person brings this, another [person] brings that and we cook and eat. There is solidarity in our neighbourhood. At times a person might decide to cook food in a big pot and we all sit together and eat. That's how we survive. At times I cook and call my neighbours to come and eat. Sometimes I do not even have to call them; I will

hear a knock on the door and a neighbour would say that she is smelling the food's aroma. I do that too; I go to a neighbour and I say that I'm hungry. We survive by sharing. At times I don't have food and don't tell anyone, but I will hear a knock on the door and when I open the door, I will be given a good plate of food; it is God providing.

Lucy is emphasising the notion of interdependence, which is foundational to the SSE. Poor urbanites depend on one another in order to obtain food, as without such practices, many of them would go hungry. This is precisely why she kept stressing the importance of the practice for their survival.

In Cameroon, food-sharing cuts across boundaries of kin. Sahlins (1972) suggested that people are more inclined to share with close kin than with other members of the community, but in the slums in Yaoundé, Douala, and Bamenda, people share food with members of their community who are not kin. The people with whom Lucy shared food were not her kin, and in fact, her community was made up of people from various ethnic backgrounds. The fact that food-sharing happens among people from different ethnic backgrounds suggests that kin identity is not the principal determinant of its occurrence.

Clearly, food-sharing in urban Cameroon is based on the notion of reciprocity. People share food with others when they have the expectation that it will be reciprocated (Gould, 1981; Cashdan, 1982). As described by Amelia:

There was a neighbour who did not like to share, but she came to my place on a regular basis in the morning around the time she knows that I have breakfast. She will say that I just came to greet you, find out how you are doing, or find out how you slept. When she visits me during breakfast I share the food. It came to a point where I already knew that she will be coming to visit me, so I would keep her share of the food. At times she will request food, sometimes she won't request food, but I already knew that she didn't come to visit me. When she was about to go somewhere, she will stop by my place and use my perfume. One day I went to her place and I used her perfume; she wasn't happy that I used it. That's the same person who usually stopped by my place to use my things, but she told me not to use her things. So, I also told her not to use my things. From that day, we stopped sharing things. It was hard to have a meal in her house.

Amelia suggests that food-sharing, like other forms of exchange, has reciprocal obligations, and that no individual is a perpetual giver or receiver. In other words, at one point the receiver of food is expected to become the giver. As stability is not the norm in the lives of the low-income population, it is by upholding these unwritten rules that they are able to have food on their needy days. The stability of the relationship between low-income individuals is based on respect for these rules. This explains why Amelia indicated that sharing with her neighbour eventually came to an end—because that party was constantly on the receiving end and did not want to give back. As Stack (1974) noted in *All Our Kin*, reciprocal obligations endure as long as both parties are mutually satisfied. Amelia could not draw upon the credit accumulated with the other party, and so the relationship had to come to an end. The behaviour of the neighbour who was not willing to reciprocate could be equated with Sahlins (1972) notion of 'negative reciprocity', as she was seeking to obtain/receive but unwilling to return the favour. Notions of reciprocity are vital to the functioning of food solidarity in these communities.

## CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have examined the inner workings of food solidarity in various communities in Cameroon. For the low-income population, food solidarity enables them to eat in times of need. Food-sharing highlights the importance of social context and social relations. The vital role of social relationships in the provision of people's daily basic needs supports the compelling point made by Polanyi (2001) and Thurnwald (1932), in that a human-oriented economy is a social affair.

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## La inclusión de mujeres y jóvenes en Cooperativas Brasileñas Solidarias: una propuesta para un índice

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### ABSTRACT:

This article presents the elaboration and the results of the “Inclusive Development Index for Solidary Cooperatives” (IDICS in Portuguese). The Index measures the inclusion of young people and women in 30 cooperatives of family farming in Minas Gerais, Brazil. Its elaboration took place through a participatory process with the cooperatives’ members and managers. IDICS consists of 2 sub-indexes of 18 variables each: The Women’s Inclusion Index (IIM) and the Youth Inclusion Index (IJJ). The collection of data was done through structured questionnaires, applied remotely to the cooperatives. The results suggest a strong heterogeneity among the cooperatives, and the results are related to the size, time of operation of the cooperative and the region of location. Most cooperatives lack progress with regard to their inclusion processes. Therefore, the Index can be a useful tool for planning and identifying good practices.

### RESUMEN:

Este artículo presenta la elaboración y los resultados del “Índice de Desarrollo Inclusivo para Cooperativas Solidarias” (IDICS en portugués). El Índice mide la inclusión de jóvenes y mujeres en 30 cooperativas de agricultura familiar en Minas Gerais, Brasil. Su elaboración se llevó a cabo mediante un proceso participativo con los socios y administradores de las cooperativas. IDICS consta de 2 subíndices de 18 variables cada uno: el Índice de Inclusión de Mujeres (IIM) y el Índice de Inclusión de Jóvenes (IJJ). La recolección de datos se realizó mediante cuestionarios estructurados, aplicados de forma remota a las cooperativas. Los resultados sugieren una fuerte heterogeneidad entre las cooperativas, y los resultados están relacionados con el tamaño, el tiempo de funcionamiento de la cooperativa y la región de ubicación. La mayoría de las cooperativas carecen de avances en sus procesos de inclusión. Por lo tanto, el Índice puede ser una herramienta útil para planificar e identificar buenas prácticas.

### KEYWORDS:

SOLIDARITY COOPERATIVES, FAMILY FARMING, RURAL YOUTH, GENDER EQUALITY, SOCIAL INCLUSION, BRAZIL.

### PALABRAS CLAVES:

COOPERATIVAS SOLIDARIAS, AGRICULTURA FAMILIAR, JUVENTUD RURAL, IGUALDAD DE GÉNERO, INCLUSIÓN SOCIAL, BRASIL.





## RÉSUMÉ

Cet article présente l'élaboration et les résultats de "l'Indice de développement inclusif pour les coopératives solidaires" (IDICS en portugais). L'Indice mesure l'inclusion des jeunes et des femmes dans 30 coopératives agricoles familiales à Minas Gerais, au Brésil. Son élaboration s'est faite dans le cadre d'un processus participatif avec les membres et les administrateurs des coopératives. IDICS se compose de deux sous-indices de 18 variables chacun : l'Indice d'inclusion des femmes (IIM) et l'Indice d'inclusion des jeunes (IIJ). La collecte des données s'est faite au moyen de questionnaires structurés, appliqués à distance aux coopératives. Les résultats suggèrent une forte hétérogénéité entre les coopératives, et les résultats sont liés à la taille, la durée de fonctionnement de la coopérative et la région d'implantation. La plupart des coopératives ne progressent pas dans leur processus d'inclusion. C'est pourquoi, l'Indice peut donc être un outil utile pour planifier et identifier les bonnes pratiques.

## RESUMO:

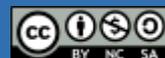
Este artigo apresenta a elaboração e os resultados do "Índice de Desenvolvimento Inclusivo para Cooperativas Solidárias" (IDICS em português). O Índice mede a inclusão de jovens e mulheres em 30 cooperativas de agricultura familiar em Minas Gerais, Brasil. Sua elaboração foi realizada por meio de um processo participativo com os associados e administradores das cooperativas. O IDICS consiste em 2 subíndices de 18 variáveis cada: o Índice de Inclusão de Mulheres (IIM) e o Índice de Inclusão de Jovens (IIJ). A coleta de dados foi realizada por meio de questionários estruturados, aplicados remotamente às cooperativas. Os resultados sugerem uma forte heterogeneidade entre as cooperativas, e os resultados estão relacionados ao tamanho, ao tempo de funcionamento da cooperativa e à região de localização. A maioria das cooperativas carece de avanços em seus processos de inclusão. Portanto, o Índice pode ser uma ferramenta útil para planejar e identificar boas práticas.

## MOTS-CLÉS:

COOPÉRATIVES SOLIDAIRES, AGRICULTURE FAMILIALE, JEUNESSE RURALE, ÉGALITÉ DES SEXES, INCLUSION SOCIALE, BRÉSIL.

## PALAVRAS CHAVES:

COOPERATIVAS SOLIDÁRIAS, AGRICULTURA FAMILIAR, JUVENTUDE RURAL, IGUALDADE DE GÊNERO, INCLUSÃO SOCIAL, BRASIL.



## INTRODUCTION

Given the contemporary context of productive restructuring, transformation and insecure jobs relations, the organization in cooperatives may be seen as a possibility of building more horizontal and solidary relations of work and production (Lima, 2004; Namorado, 2007, 2009). One of the greatest advantages of the cooperative organization is the possibility of control by the workers, which are responsible for defining the action strategies and for the technical knowledge involved in the processes (Singer, 2002; Gaiger, 2013). In this sense, cooperatives are institutions with the potential to reduce social inequalities and promote intergenerational well-being, including gender and environmental sustainability (Schneider, 2015).

Among the various topics of interest in the discussion on cooperativism, those related to gender and youth have gained importance in recent decades, especially due to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, of the United Nations. In the case of family farming and the solidarity economy, the self-perception of women about their social positions, the inclusion of women in leadership positions, the recognition of different women's jobs and the improvement in the quality of family relationships, among other topics, are discussed in recent empirical literature (Woortmann & Woortmann, 1997; Magalhães, 2009; Simon & Boeira, 2017; Gomes *et al.*, 2018). The discussion on youth, on the other hand, involves intergenerational conflicts, demands for the appropriation of technologies in production and for technical and university education, among other issues (Camarano & Abramovay, 1999; Mendonça *et al.*, 2013; Kischener *et al.*, 2015; Boessio & Doula, 2016).

This article presents the process of elaboration of the “Inclusive Development Index for Solidarity Cooperatives” (IDICS), with the aim of measuring the practices of inclusion of women and youth in the 30 family farming cooperatives affiliated to the Union of Family Agriculture and Economy Cooperatives Minas Gerais Solidarity —Unicafes MG. The process of elaborating the Index was based on a collaboration between Colmeia—a group of studies, research and extension in popular and solidarity economy from Face/UFMG, Unicafes MG and Trias Brasil.

The paper was divided into five sections, in addition to this introduction. The first section provides a literature review on youth and gender in solidarity economy and family farming. The review was built from systematic bibliographic research of articles and reports produced in the last 20 years, registered with the main academic-scientific indexers. The second section presents the methodology adopted for the elaboration of the Index, which included the carrying out of focus groups with members of the cooperatives and managers of Unicafes MG and methodological definitions related to the construction of the Index. The third section presents the Index proposal, while the next section presents the results. The last section brings a discussion on the suitability of IDICS to the research aims and its limits.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Even though the majority of the world's population is made up of women, and the majority of the active workforce in Brazil today is female (Simon & Boeira, 2017), we can still observe the influence of gender discrimination in processes and labor activities. Women not only occupy fewer leadership positions than men, but they also receive lower salaries to do the same functions (Simon & Boeira, 2017). The entry of women into the labor market, even with levels of education on average higher than men's, did not translate into fair remuneration and full guarantee of labor rights. In addition, the predominance of a view that women's activities are restricted to the domestic environment means that, even in a scenario of occupation of public spaces and outside the home, women still remain as supposedly “responsible” for domestic activities, which implies a double day of work exploration and an almost uninterrupted work period.

The organization of cooperatives, based on the principles of solidarity, equity and social emancipation, represents the possibility of creating work environments and the collectivization of production that recognize women's demands. In solidarity economy cooperatives, in several cases, women find the possibility of reconciling family and work, finding greater access to credit, alternatives for generating income and participating in professional and technical training processes (Simon & Boeira, 2017; Guérin, 2005). In addition to generating monetary income and food security for the family, the activities allow for the development of a political sense of identity and strengthen women's struggle for recognition.

However, the transition to a more gender-inclusive scenario within these cooperatives and associations takes longer than the principles seem to assume. As shown by Gomes *et al.* (2018), based on data from the Second Mapping of Solidarity Economy in Brazil (2010-2013), carried out by the now extinct National Secretariat for Solidarity Economy (SENAES), it is possible to visualize a series of bottlenecks that persist in these projects, which are connected to the typical gender oppression suffered by women in the labor market. Although cooperatives are the main source of income for women and their families, few have infrastructure focused on the specifics of the problems faced by members. As the mapping showed, only 4 % of the enterprises are able to take care of the female member's children during the work period, which leaves almost 20 % of the associates dependent on informal care networks (neighbors, friends and relatives) and almost 18 % dependent on schools and day care centers. In addition, only 7 % of husbands and partners work in domestic and care activities (Gaiger and Grupo ECOSOL, 2014 apud Simon & Boeira, 2017).

Among production and marketing cooperatives, such as the pay or “wages” withdrawal linked to productivity still predominates (59.1 %). This form of pay, in addition to producing a work environment more susceptible to the emergence of internal hierarchies in the enterprise, can become an aggravating factor with regard to women. The frequent occurrence of double shifts, associated with care work (with children, elderly and infirm), distorts the measurement of female productivity and potentially penalizes them for not being able to dedicate themselves fully. Although only 21.1 % of these cooperatives work with equal withdrawal, the very existence of a mechanism other than the one based on productivity points to a possible positive change in terms of inclusion and female socioeconomic emancipation (Gomes *et al.*, 2018).

Another important example concerns the guarantee of labor rights safety equipment, maternity leave, professional qualification, paid rest and social security. Within the group of production and marketing cooperatives, only 17.4 % ensure professional qualification and 11.8 % have maternity leave. In service cooperatives, the scenario is no different: only 50 % guarantee social security, with only 19.4 % offering the possibility of paid rest and maternity leave (*ibid.*).

Even in the face of these bottlenecks, the spaces created from these experiences and productive activities play a crucial role in the creation of the members' subjective and identities. For many women, the possibility of “coming to have resources under their personal control expands their decision-making power over their use, making choices different from those that the husband adopts when he has control over the family's resources” (Sales, 2009, p. 281). In addition, the work perspective based on the notions of cooperation, self-management and solidarity enables an effective participation of women in decision-making processes and in public spaces (Simon & Boeira, 2017).

With regard to the issue of inclusion in youth, we see that young people constitute an extremely heterogeneous social group. The people that make up this group are exposed to different experiences and values, which results in a diversity of rationalizes, aspirations and desires. Despite keeping common experiences, the making of cuts is essential to understand the various youths (de Arce & Mateo, 2018). For the perspective discussed here, that of youths in cooperativism, there is no consolidated literature, when compared to themes such as rural youth.

The socioeconomic dynamics of the countryside, say Pereira and Marcoccia (2019), is marked by a double subordination of young people and women. This condition begins in the family environment, with patriarchal repression and the centrality of the management model in the figure of the father, who is generally reluctant to accept innovations proposed by the children in management processes (Guaraná, 2009; Boessio & Doula, 2016).

Heritage and succession strategies tend to rank the continuity of young men, resulting in the exodus of young women to medium and large cities or in migration to other communities and formation of new families in other rural communities. Allied to this, the extreme lack of material resources and public services contributes to a migration process for the urban space and contributes to the breaking of community, family and cultural ties linked to the territory left (Valadares *et al.*, 2017). Migration ends up engendering a process of ageing and masculinization of the countryside, as well as contributing to the drop in the dynamism of the rural social fabric.

Other demands that recurrently appear in the literature on youth and cooperatives concern education and the incorporation of technological innovations in production processes (Barrios *et al.*, 2019). Ensuring access to education and technical training proved to be one of the most effective means of maintaining the interest of young people, which points to the essential character of the partnerships established by cooperatives with teaching and educational support institutions (Boessio & Doula, 2016).

In addition, the result of situations where the right to participation is concentrated in the hands of a few actors, can incur in an asymmetry of power that negatively affects not only the relations within the cooperative, weakening its democratic assumptions, but also cooperative relations with markets, depending on their nature (Tamayo & Molina, 2018). It is necessary to carry out a process of managing heterogeneity, without building rigid hierarchies that would simulate the organization of markets or capitalist companies (Tamayo & Molina, 2018). Thus, the importance of an extraeconomic proximity between these actors becomes a central point, allowing bridges to be built between the personal lives of young people and the daily life of the cooperative. This reinforces the need for partnerships with public initiatives and policies concerned with youth, such as DAP Jovem<sup>1</sup> and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Given the adverse structural conditions faced by these groups in the formal labor market, cooperativism emerges as a viable alternative by proposing a form of organization capable of providing better material, social and economic conditions for farming families, while allowing for strengthening the social fabric, interpersonal relationships and processes of identity construction and community ties.

## METHODOLOGY

### Focus Groups

After the literature review, focus groups were held with participants from the cooperatives and managers of Unicafes Minas Gerais. Between October 15<sup>th</sup> and November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 3 focus groups were held: i) with cooperative women and managers of cooperatives; ii) with young cooperative members and managers of cooperatives; iii) with directors of Unicafes MG. The groups aimed to find the main dimensions of the inclusion of women and youth in cooperatives affiliated with Unicafes MG, from the perspective of the participants.

For each focus group, 6 to 8 participants were selected. The selection was carried out in conjunction with Unicafes MG and sought to meet the diversity of regions of the state, gender and age group. Focus groups were held in October and November 2020, through the Google Meet platform. The elaboration of the scripts, the selection of the participants and the conduction of the focus groups took place in partnership with Unicafes MG and Trias, and in line with the guidance of the bibliography specialized in qualitative methods (Bardin, 1977; Flick, 2009; Weller, 2010; Almeida, 2016). The data obtained from the focus group were analyzed using the content analysis technique, to capture patterns and categories of responses, in order to support the construction of the IDICS.

Among the main points discussed in the focus groups, we point out:

- The difficulty of attracting young people to participate in cooperatives was highlighted.

One of the participants reported that “it is necessary to rescue the meaning and importance of the work of the rural producer among young people”. Within this

- perspective, issues related to the recognition of the young person as an individual and to migration were also raised—in the focus group with women, the participants noticed the absence of young women in the countryside.
- another aspect that was often mentioned was the youth’s difficulty in expressing himself. This difficulty may arise, according to the participants, from the fear of speaking up in front of parents and older members of the cooperative, or even from the lack of space for this. In contrast, the cooperatives that opened up to greater participation by this group experienced important innovations;
- as for the valorization of female work within cooperatives, there was a certain convergence in the participants’ discourse regarding the difficulty of women being
- “seen”. Women’s work is sometimes reduced or even underestimated—even more when there are other demands that women need to meet, such as taking care of the home and family;
- according to the participating women, despite not participating so much in manual production, women are more active in marketing. When it comes time to sell products at fairs, women take on this front in cooperatives;

<sup>1</sup> DAP is a Brazilian legal instrument and certificate that allows small and familiar farmers to gain access to subsidies and credit for productive purposes.

- life as a member has brought, for many women, greater independence, especially due to the income received. Another point mentioned that relates to the question of independence concerns mobility in the territory. According to the participants, the possession of a National Driver's License, as well as access to vehicles, are fundamental factors for the autonomy of women living in rural areas;
- the leaders acknowledged that a series of demands presented (directly or indirectly) by the young people that are not answered by the cooperatives, related to income, education, work, autonomy, credibility, among others. For them, these issues have not been well addressed within family farming cooperatives, making it difficult ("not to say impossible") to permanently attract young people to the countryside;
- For the leaders, the responsibility for the participation of young people does not fall only on the direction, but also on the cooperating youth. One of the participants spoke about the need to "create a 'enchantment' of young people with cooperativism";
- about issues related to the inclusion of women, the responses from the leaders were diverse. One of the participants stated that women do not participate due to a lack of will and initiative on their part, while another said that there is a greater dimension, involving the home and children-demands that must time and dedication;
- another participant reported that the leaders themselves sometimes do not want to give up these places or allow other people to occupy them as well. In a way, this perception converges with one of the reports presented in the second focus group: "it's not just about putting untrained women in the direction, because that would make the 30 % quotas just for 'filling sausage',<sup>2</sup> that's why the need for training and qualification" (Director of Unicafe MG, participant in the focus group, in November 2020). Other participants contributed by stating that it is not only necessary for women to change or their forced inclusion in cooperatives, but it is also necessary for men to start thinking differently about female work and the place they both occupy in the cooperative and in family life. Within this aspect, the appreciation of women's work is essential.

## The construction of IDICS

The literature review and focus groups allowed us to identify the main dimensions of the inclusion of women and young people in the cooperatives in question. These dimensions were then associated with qualitative and quantitative variables. Then, a simple aggregation criterion of the variables in an Inclusive Development Index of Solidarity Cooperatives, IDICS was proposed.

The proposal for the construction of IDICS was methodologically based on the specific literature on the development of social indicators (Carley, 1985; Kayano & Caldas, 2001; Jannuzzi, 2014, 2017) and sought to meet the following properties: i) *relevance*: IDICS should give for Unicafe MG and its affiliates to guide, monitor and evaluate their actions for the inclusion of young people and women; ii) *validity*: proximity to the abstract concept or political demand that gave rise to it (inclusion of young people and women); iii) *reliability*: quality of data collection, systematization and standardization; iv) *good territorial and population coverage*: capturing information about the reality of as many people as possible; v) *sensitivity and specificity*: ability to present relevant variation in the face of changes in the studied reality; vi) *methodological transparency and communicability*: people who did not participate in the elaboration of the index must understand its methods and objectives.

Still in accord to Kayano and Caldas (2001) and Jannuzzi (2014), and according to the previous steps, an index was chosen that was: a) *goal*: referring to concrete occurrences or empirical entities of social reality, constructed to from statistics; b) *mixed*: a composition of advice indicators, process indicators, result indicators and impact indicators (Jannuzzi, 2005); c) *analytical and composite*: contemplates more than one measure of the studied reality and aggregating, in a single number, several simple indicators, establishing some type of average between them.

The methodological choices mentioned above allow us to visualize two main limits of IDICS. The first limit concerns the ability to capture the reality in question. Although gender and youth issues are related to different levels of social

<sup>2</sup> Brazilian expression that means the filling of something without purpose. In this case, the filling of the direction with women without any justification other than filling itself.

reality (individual, family, cooperative, municipality and region, society), the focus of the Index is on the cooperative level. Thus, some issues related to the individual and the family will not be captured by IDICS. The second limit concerns the measurement of subjective aspects. Although subjective issues are crucial to capture aspects of the theme in question, IDICS does not allow them to be incorporated. We therefore suggest that subjective issues be addressed and dealt with during training and other actions within the cooperatives and Unicafe MG.

## IDICS: A PROPOSAL

For the construction of IDICS, we propose two sub-indices:

- 1) *Women's Inclusion Index (IIM)*
- 2) *Youth Inclusion Index (IJJ)*

Each of the sub-indexes is made up of dimensions, which, in turn, are made up of variables. The values obtained for these variables are aggregated through a simple average (sum of the values divided by the number of variables). Then, the values referring to the dimensions are aggregated through a weighted average, considering the weights given for the dimensions (sum of multiplications between values and weights divided by the sum of weights).

The value of each sub-index varies between 0 and 1. The closer to 0, the lower the degree of inclusion of the cooperative to women and youth. The closer to 1, the greater the degree of inclusion.

The IDICS corresponds to the simple average between the Sub-Indices and will also vary between 0 and 1, according to the degree of inclusion of the cooperative to women and youth:

$$\text{IDICS} = (\text{IIM} + \text{IJJ})/2$$

Annex I describe the Women's Inclusion Index (IIM) and the Youth Inclusion Index (IJJ), both composed of 3 dimensions and 18 variables. The dimensions, their respective variables and the aggregation criteria were presented and validated with the Board of Directors of Unicafe MG and the Trias team.

The first dimension concerns the "Participation and organization of women/youth in the cooperative". This dimension is considered the most relevant, as it is related to outcome variables related to inclusion in cooperatives. For this reason, this dimension was assigned a weight equal to 2.

The second dimension refers to the "Autonomy of women/youth cooperated(s)". This dimension, although fundamental, encompasses individual variables of women and young members and, in this sense, not necessarily under the control of the cooperative. Therefore, this dimension was assigned a weight equal to 1.

The third dimension is "Incentives for the cooperative, training and partnerships for women/youth". This dimension is related to actions at the cooperative level towards training and inclusion. This dimension was assigned a weight equal to 1.5.

## 4 RESULTS

### IDICS-full version

Of the total number of cooperatives that responded to the questionnaire (22), 12 responded to all the proposed questions. The others did not have organized information on at least one of the variables, which points to the need for greater planning by cooperatives for effective adherence to the Index, as will be discussed below. Thus, initially, the results referring to dimensions, sub-indices and IDICS for these 12 cooperatives will be presented (Table 1).

**Table 1. Descriptive statistics of dimensions, sub-indices and IDICS for 12 of the consulted cooperatives**

Dimension	Average	Standard Deviation	Min.	Max.	Number of Observations
Participation and organization of women in the cooperative	0,371	0,175	0,196	0,753	12
Autonomy of cooperative women	0,627	0,221	0,280	1,000	12
Cooperative incentives, training and partnerships for women	0,135	0,229	0,000	0,625	12
Participation and organization of youth in the cooperative	0,273	0,119	0,050	0,454	12
Cooperative youth autonomy	0,491	0,331	0,000	0,917	12
Cooperative incentives, training and partnerships for youth	0,177	0,241	0,000	0,875	12
Women's Inclusion Index (IIM)	0,349	0,126	0,176	0,595	12
Youth Inclusion Index (IJI)	0,289	0,115	0,022	0,417	12
Inclusive Development Index for Solidarity Cooperatives (IDICS)	0,319	0,096	0,134	0,423	12

Source: own elaboration based on data collected from cooperatives

As can be seen in Table 1, the dimension with the highest mean value was “Autonomy of cooperative women”. This dimension also presented the highest minimum and maximum values (being the only one for which a value of “1” was observed for any of the cooperatives).

Then, the dimension “cooperative youth autonomy” stands out, with the second-highest average and the second-highest maximum value. As mentioned in the previous section, these dimensions are composed of each variable of women and young cooperative members, over which cooperatives have little control.

The lowest values are related to the effective actions of the cooperatives for inclusion

(Dimensions “Incentives, training and partnerships”), both for young people and for women. This result indicates the need for greater investment by these institutions in activities involving partnerships, exchanges and training, in addition to adapting the planning and adaptation of the cooperative’s space and staff.

The dimensions related to the participation and organization of women and youth had intermediate average values. Note, in this case, the smallest values of standard deviation, indicating that the realities of the cooperatives are more similar, about this dimension.

As for the sub-indices, it is observed that the highest values refer to the inclusion of women (IIM), while the IJI has lower minimum and maximum values and lower average and standard deviation. This result is related to the better conditions of cooperative women, on average, especially in terms of participation, organization and autonomy. It should be noted, however, that the results for women and young people do not show very marked differences, which suggests the need for greater investment by cooperatives in actions for both groups.

The IDICS values had an average of 0.319, indicating an intermediate degree of inclusion, when considering both youths and women. The low value of the standard deviation is noteworthy, which suggests that, when considering

all dimensions of the two sub-indices, the realities of cooperatives are quite similar. This is also clear when we look at the Index's minimum and maximum values (0.134 and 0.423, respectively).

Table 2 presents the average results for the sub-indices and for the IDICS, according to the characteristics of the cooperatives. In general, higher average values are observed (indicating a higher degree of inclusive development) in smaller cooperatives (lower volume traded, fewer members) and those with a more recent foundation (after 2006). The cooperatives in Zona da Mata and Triângulo Mineiro regions are also noteworthy.

**Table 2. Average values of the sub-indices and IDICS, according to characteristics of 12 of the consulted cooperatives**

Characteristics of the cooperatives	Women's Inclusion Index (IIM)	Youth Inclusion Index (IIJ)	IDICS	Number of Observations
<i>Sales volume in 2020 (tons.)</i>				
2 to 5	0,546	0,397	0,472	2
6 to 10	0,393	0,378	0,386	3
Over 10	0,291	0,227	0,259	6
<i>Regions</i>				
Jequitinhonha	0,194	0,277	0,236	1
Metropolitana	0,370	0,157	0,264	1
Noroeste de Minas	0,303	0,220	0,261	2
Norte de Minas	0,221	0,245	0,233	1
Sul/Sudoeste de Minas	-	-	-	0
Triângulo Mineiro	0,375	0,385	0,380	1
Vale do Mucuri	-	-	-	0
Zona da Mata	0,404	0,328	0,366	6
<i>Foundation</i>				
Prior to 2005	0,233	0,134	0,183	2
2006 to 2010	0,353	0,387	0,370	3
After 2010	0,381	0,292	0,337	7
<i>Number of members</i>				
Up to 50	0,364	0,281	0,322	7
51 to 150	0,329	0,302	0,315	5
151 or more	-	-	-	0

Source: own elaboration based on data collected from cooperatives

## IDICS-reduced version

In view of the difficulties of a good part of the cooperatives in reporting all the information necessary to calculate the IDICS, we propose a second version of the IDICS, which we will call the “reduced version”. This version is composed of the variables answered by all 22 cooperatives, which correspond to items M1, M3, M4, M6, M11 to M18, and J1, J3, J4, J6, J11 to J18 of the table presented in Annex I. In the reduced version, each sub-indicators are formed by 2 dimensions, totalizing 12 variables in each sub-indicator. For simplification purposes, weight 1 was assigned to each dimension. We present below the results referring to dimensions, sub-indices and the IDICS, in its reduced version, for the 22 cooperatives (Table 3).

**Table 3. Descriptive statistics of dimensions, sub-indices and IDICS (reduced version) for the 22 cooperatives**

Dimension	Average	Standard Deviation	Min.	Max.	Number of Observations
Participation and organization of women in the cooperative	0,415	0,191	0,143	0,880	22
Cooperative incentives, training and partnerships for women	0,153	0,244	0,000	0,875	22
Participation and organization of youth in the cooperative	0,210	0,166	0,000	0,576	22
Cooperative incentives, training and partnerships for youth	0,233	0,262	0,000	0,875	22
Women's Inclusion Index (IIM)	0,284	0,183	0,071	0,740	22
Youth Inclusion Index (IUI)	0,222	0,192	0,000	0,663	22
Inclusive Development Solidarity Index for Cooperatives (IDICS)	0,253	0,173	0,049	0,702	22

Source: own elaboration based on data collected from cooperatives

According to Table 3, the dimension with the highest average value (higher than the averages of the other dimensions) was “Participation and organization of women in the cooperative”. This dimension also had the highest minimum and maximum values. Then, the dimensions linked to the IIJ are highlighted. The dimension “Incentives for the cooperative, training and partnerships for women” had the lowest average, which indicates the need for greater investment by institutions in internal discussions, exchanges and partnerships and exchanges, among other actions.

As for the sub-indices, it is observed that the highest values refer to the inclusion of women (IIM), while the IUI has lower minimum and maximum values. This result is related to the better conditions of cooperative women, reported in the first dimension of the IIM. It should be noted, however, that the average values of the sub-indices for women and young people, as well as to being low, are very similar, which suggests the need for greater investment by cooperatives in actions for both groups. It is also observed the proximity of standard deviations and minimum and maximum values for the two sub-indices, suggesting similar realities of the inclusion of young people and women. These values are also close to those found for the IDICS, which had an average of 0.253, indicating a low medium to intermediate degree of inclusion.

Table 4 presents the average results for the sub-indices and for the IDICS, according to the characteristics of the cooperatives. In general, higher average values are observed in intermediate-sized cooperatives (2 to 5 tons sold in 2020) and with a greater number of members (more than 150). Cooperatives founded before 2005 and those in the Sul/Sudoeste de Minas, Norte de Minas, Zona da Mata and Vale do Mucuri regions stand out.

**Table 4. Average values of the sub-indices and IDICS, according to characteristics of the 22 cooperatives**

Characteristics of the cooperatives	Women's Inclusion Index (IIM)	Youth Inclusion Index (IJJ)	IDICS	Number of Observations
<i>Sales volume in 2020 (tons.)</i> Up to 1	0,404	0,313	0,358	1
2 to 5	0,593	0,439	0,516	2
6 to 10	0,231	0,168	0,199	5
Over 10	0,272	0,230	0,251	11
<i>Regions</i> Jequitinhonha	0,129	0,179	0,154	1
Metropolitana	0,146	0,125	0,135	1
Noroeste de Minas	0,209	0,136	0,173	3
Norte de Minas	0,283	0,262	0,272	5
Sul/Sudoeste de Minas	0,740	0,663	0,702	1
Triângulo Mineiro	0,133	0,236	0,184	1
Vale do Mucuri	0,324	0,002	0,163	1
Zona da Mata	0,304	0,217	0,261	9
<i>Foundation</i> Prior to 2005	0,380	0,291	0,335	5
2006 to 2010	0,305	0,205	0,255	7
After 2011	0,222	0,199	0,210	10
<i>Number of members</i> Up to 50	0,226	0,164	0,195	9
51 to 150	0,271	0,175	0,223	9
151 or more	0,444	0,456	0,450	4

Source: own elaboration based on data collected from cooperatives

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article sought to present the process of elaboration of the Inclusive Development Index for Solidarity Cooperatives (IDICS), with the aim of measuring the practices of inclusion of women and youth in the 30 family farming cooperatives affiliated to Unicafe MG. The process of building the Index went through document analysis, literature review and focus groups with members of cooperatives and managers of Unicafe MG. These steps allowed the identification of three dimensions of inclusion of women and youth in the cooperatives in question: i) participation and organization; ii) autonomy; iii) incentives for the cooperative, training and partnerships. These dimensions were then associated with numerical variables. Then, a simple aggregation criterion for the variables into two sub-indices was proposed: The Women's Inclusion Index (IIM) and the Youth Inclusion Index (IJJ). IDICS corresponds to the simple average of these two indicators.

More than just a number or an indicator, the Index can be seen as a collective construction, expressing in each dimension and in each variable an active demand of representatives and cooperative members of Unicafe MG on topics related to inclusion. The IDICS tool represents the possibility of periodic monitoring, by cooperatives and Unicafe MG, of their progress with regard to the inclusion of young people and women. For this, it is necessary that the data are periodically updated by the cooperatives, since the construction of a historical series for the Index, with defined periodicity, can give to a better monitoring of the inclusive development of the cooperatives. To this end, cooperatives must have a data collection plan, such as establishing their own schedule that meets the institution's specificities and including data collection in the agenda for assemblies and meetings.

Some tools can give to the effective adhesion to IDICS by cooperatives and Unicafe MG, as well as to the introduction and consolidation of the discussions and debates raised during the elaboration of the Index in the daily routine of the management processes of the cooperatives. Among these tools, we highlight a possible advertising material for IDICS, intended for its dissemination to cooperatives and members, seeking to give greater visibility to the Index.

Another possible tool is a spreadsheet, which cooperatives can use for their own diagnosis and planning of actions. It is important that a cooperative member become responsible for collecting and organizing the information that composes the dimensions of the Index to feed this spreadsheet with new information and data. The person chosen should preferably be on the cooperative's board of directors and have knowledge on the topic of inclusion of young people and women, in addition to having ample access to all the required information.

As possible consequences of post-pandemic action, we suggest the exchange of experiences between cooperatives, focusing on those that stand out for their inclusion activities. In addition, the holding of courses, lectures and training on these topics is extremely important for the continuity of debates around inclusion and for raising the awareness of cooperative members and managers about the importance of data collection and its incorporation into planning activities.

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## Annex I - Description of the IDICS component sub-indices - full version

Table I.1. Description of the Women's Inclusion Index (IIM)-dimensions and variables

DIMENSION: WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AND ORGANIZATION IN COOPERATIVE (weight = 2)		
Variable	Calculation method	Nature of variable
M1. Female participation in the cooperative (cooperated)	Number of women members/Total number of members	Proportion (varies between 0 and 1)
M2. Female participation in the cooperative (employees)	Number of female employees in the cooperative/Total number of employees in the cooperative	Proportion (varies between 0 and 1)
M3. Participation of women in management positions	Number of women in management positions in the cooperative/Total number of people in management positions in the cooperative	Proportion (varies between 0 and 1)
M4. Participation of women in commercialization	Number of women members who participate in commercialization in the last 2 years/Total number of women members	Proportion (varies between 0 and 1)
M5. Female participation in assemblies	Number of women who attended the last cooperative meeting/Total number of cooperative women	Proportion (varies between 0 and 1)
M6. Existence of a women's group or collective	Existence of a work group or collective formed by women in the cooperative	Binary (Yes = 1; No = 0)
DIMENSION: AUTONOMY OF COOPERATED WOMEN (weight = 1)		
Variable	Calculation method	Nature of variable
M7. Education	Number of cooperative women with complete secondary education, complete higher education or technical education/Total number of cooperative women	Proportion (varies between 0 and 1)
M8. Income	Average commercial participation (income) of cooperative women/ Total average commercial participation (income)	Proportion (varies between 0 and 1) *
M9. Autonomy related to mobility	Number of female members who have a National Driver's License/ Total number of female members	Proportion (varies between 0 and 1)
M10. Autonomy related to credit and participation in technical/productive assistance programs	Number of cooperative women whose names appear in the DAP/Total number of cooperative women	Proportion (varies between 0 and 1)

DIMENSION: INCENTIVES FOR THE COOPERATIVE, TRAINING AND PARTNERSHIPS (weight = 1,5)		
Variable	Calculation method	Nature of variable
M11. Existence of a "quota" for women (percentage or minimum number of cooperative women)	Existence of a percentage or minimum number of participations of cooperative women	Binary (Yes = 1; No = 0)
M12. Existence of space or activities for children in the cooperative	Does the cooperative have a space for children under the care of the cooperative members, during the meetings and events held by the cooperative? Or does the cooperative have someone responsible for taking care of these children during the events?	Binary (Yes = 1; No = 0)
M13. Existence of a resolution or plan related to gender equality	Existence, in the statute or plan of the cooperative, of a resolution aimed at promoting, reinforcing and monitoring equality and non-discrimination based on sex	Binary (Yes = 1; No = 0)
M14. Internal training/education on the gender theme	In the last 2 years, has there been any training (course, lecture...) on the topic of gender, organized by the cooperative itself?	Binary (Yes = 1; No = 0)
M15. Existence of a sector or employee dedicated to issues related to women	Existence of a sector or employee dedicated to issues related to women	Binary (Yes = 1; No = 0)
M16. Partnership with institutions	In addition to Unicafe MG, does the cooperative have a partnership with any institution for the development of specific actions for women?	Binary (Yes = 1; No = 0)
M17. Exchange with other cooperatives and institutions	Has the cooperative already promoted any exchanges with other cooperatives or other successful institutions in the inclusion of women (with the exception of Unicafe MG)?	Binary (Yes = 1; No = 0)
M18. Existence of an income generation project aimed at women	Does the cooperative have any job and income generation project specifically for women?	Binary (Yes = 1; No = 0)

Source: own elaboration.

\* For this variable, there is the possibility of values greater than 1. In these cases, the maximum value of the variable will be set to 1, for simplification purposes.

**Table I.2. Description of the Youth Inclusion Index (IJI)-dimensions and variables**

DIMENSÃO: PARTICIPAÇÃO E ORGANIZAÇÃO DE JOVENS NA COOPERATIVA (weight = 2)		
Variable	Calculation method	Nature of variable
J1. Participation of young people in the cooperative (cooperatives)	Number of young members/Total number of members	Proportion (varies between 0 and 1)
J2. Participation of young people in the cooperative (employees)	Number of young employees in the cooperative/Total number of employees in the cooperative	Proportion (varies between 0 and 1)
J3. Participation of young people in management positions	Number of young people in management positions in the cooperative/ Total number of people in management positions in the cooperative	Proportion (varies between 0 and 1)
J4. Participation of young people in commercialization	Number of young members who participate in commercialization in the last 2 years/Total number of young members	Proportion (varies between 0 and 1)
J5. Participation of young people in assemblies	Number of young people who attended the last cooperative meeting/ Total number of young members	Proportion (varies between 0 and 1)
J6. Existence of a youth group or collective	Existence of a work group or collective formed by young people in the cooperative	Binary (Yes = 1; No = 0)
DIMENSÃO: AUTONOMIA DA JUVENTUDE COOPERADA (weight = 1)		
Variable	Calculation method	Nature of variable
J7. Education	Number of cooperative youth with complete secondary education, complete higher education or technical education/Total number of cooperative youth	Proportion (varies between 0 and 1)
J8. Income	Commercial participation (income) average of young cooperative members/Commercial participation (income) average total	Proportion (varies between 0 and 1) *
J9. Autonomy related to land ownership	Number of cooperative youth whose names appear on the land title/ Total number of cooperative youth	Proportion (varies between 0 and 1)

J10. Autonomy related to credit and participation in technical/productive assistance programs	Number of cooperative youth whose names appear in the DAP (DAP Jovem)/Total number of cooperative youth	Proportion (varies between 0 and 1)
<b>DIMENSÃO: INCENTIVOS PELA COOPERATIVA, FORMAÇÃO E PARCERIAS (weight = 1,5)</b>		
Variable	Calculation method	Nature of variable
J11. Existence of a "quota" for young people (percentage or minimum number of cooperative young people)	Existence of a percentage or minimum number of cooperative youth participation	Binary (Yes = 1; No = 0)
J12. Existence of resolution or plan related to youth	Existence, in the statute or plan of the cooperative, of a resolution aimed at promoting, reinforcing and monitoring the inclusion of young people and the right to education of young people	Binary (Yes = 1; No = 0)
J13. Internal training on the topic of youth	In the last 2 years, has there been any training (course, lecture...) on the topic of youth, organized by the cooperative itself?	Binary (Yes = 1; No = 0)
J14. Existence of a sector or employee dedicated to issues related to youth	Existence of a sector or employee dedicated to issues related to youth	Binary (Yes = 1; No = 0)
J15. Partnership with institutions	In addition to Unicafe MG, does the cooperative have a partnership with any institution for the development of specific actions for young people?	Binary (Yes = 1; No = 0)
J16. Exchange with other cooperatives and institutions	Has the cooperative already promoted any exchanges with other cooperatives or other successful institutions in the inclusion of young people (with the exception of Unicafe MG)?	Binary (Yes = 1; No = 0)
J17. Existence of a project related to technological incorporation or innovation	Are there projects for technological incorporation or product innovation in the cooperative?	Binary (Yes = 1; No = 0)
J18. Existence of an income generation project aimed at young people	Does the cooperative have any job and income generation project specifically for young people?	Binary (Yes = 1; No = 0)

Source: own elaboration.

\* For this variable, there is the possibility of values greater than 1. In these cases, the maximum value of the variable will be set to 1, for simplification purposes.

# Score card approach to measuring sustainability of selected cooperatives in West Shoa Zone, Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia



## Enfoque de tarjeta de puntuación para medir la sostenibilidad de cooperativas seleccionadas en la zona de West Shoa, estado regional de Oromia, Etiopía

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### ABSTRACT:

The present paper analyzed the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of cooperatives sustainability and examined the sustainability oriented competitive strategies adopted by sample cooperatives. Field survey method will be followed. Multi-stage sampling method was adopted to select study area, cooperatives and respondents. Six cooperatives and by adopting PPS 100 members were selected. The sustainability score card approach advocated by Measuring Cooperative Difference Research Network (MDCRN), Canada and Morris Inequality Index were used. The result shows that the agricultural cooperatives do have better position with economic sustainability, to some extent social sustainability, but they do not have favourable situation in environmental sustainability so that the cooperatives are located at moderate and low level of sustainability condition. With regard to comprehensive cooperative sustainability the same result is seen among sampled cooperatives. Sustainability level and ranking are in consonance with the strategies they adopted and right strategy at right time effectively is advocated.

### RESUMEN:

El presente documento analizó las dimensiones económicas, sociales y ambientales de la sostenibilidad de las cooperativas y examinó las estrategias competitivas orientadas a la sostenibilidad adoptadas por las cooperativas de la muestra. Se utilizó el método de la encuesta de campo. Se adoptó el método de muestreo de etapas múltiples para seleccionar el área de estudio, las cooperativas y los encuestados. Se seleccionaron seis cooperativas y mediante la adopción de PPS 100 miembros. Se utilizó el enfoque de la tarjeta de puntuación de sostenibilidad promovido por la Red de Investigación de la Diferencia Cooperativa de Medición (MDCRN), Canadá y el Índice de Desigualdad de Morris. El resultado muestra que las cooperativas agrícolas sí tienen mejor posicionamiento con sustentabilidad económica, en cierta medida sustentabilidad social, pero no tienen situación favorable en sustentabilidad ambiental por lo que las cooperativas se ubican en condición de nivel moderado y bajo de sustentabilidad. Con respecto a la sostenibilidad cooperativa integral, se observa el mismo resultado entre las cooperativas incluidas en la muestra. El nivel de sostenibilidad y la clasificación están en consonancia con las estrategias que adoptaron y se promueve la estrategia correcta en el momento adecuado.

### KEY WORDS:

SUSTAINABILITY, ECONOMIC,  
SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL,  
SCORE CARD

### PALABRAS CLAVES:

SOSTENIBILIDAD, ECONÓMICA,  
SOCIAL, MEDIO AMBIENTE,  
TARJETA DE PUNTUACIÓN.





## RÉSUMÉ

Ce document analyse les dimensions économiques, sociales et environnementales de la viabilité des coopératives et examine les stratégies compétitives axées sur la durabilité adoptée par les coopératives de l'échantillon. La méthode de l'enquête sur le terrain a été utilisée. La méthode d'échantillonnage à étapes multiples a été adoptée pour sélectionner le domaine d'étude, les coopératives et les répondants. Six coopératives ont été sélectionnées et grâce à l'adoption de PPS 100 membres. L'approche du tableau de bord de la durabilité promue par le Réseau de recherche sur la différence de mesure coopérative (MDCRN), le Canada et l'Indice des inégalités de Morris a été utilisée. Le résultat montre que les coopératives agricoles ont un meilleur positionnement avec la durabilité économique, dans une certaine mesure la durabilité sociale, mais elles n'ont pas de situation favorable en matière de durabilité environnementale, de sorte que les coopératives se situent dans une situation de niveau modéré et faible de durabilité. En ce qui concerne la durabilité coopérative intégrée, le même résultat est observé pour les coopératives de l'échantillon. Le niveau de durabilité et la classification sont conformes aux stratégies qu'ils ont adoptées et la bonne stratégie est promue au bon moment.

## RESUMO:

O presente documento analisou as dimensões econômica, social e ambiental da sustentabilidade cooperativa e examinou as estratégias competitivas orientadas para a sustentabilidade adotadas pelas cooperativas da amostra. Foi utilizado o método de enquete de campo. O método de amostragem em múltiplos estágios foi adotado para selecionar a área de estudo, as cooperativas e os pesquisados. Seis cooperativas foram selecionadas e por meio da adoção do PPS 100 membros promovidos pela Rede de Investigação da Diferença Cooperativa de Medição (MDCRN), Canadá e o índice de Desigualdade de Morris. O resultado mostra que as cooperativas agrícolas possuem uma posição melhor com sustentabilidade econômica, em certa medida sustentabilidade social, mas não possuem uma situação favorável na sustentabilidade ambiental, portanto as cooperativas estão localizadas em uma condição de nível moderado e baixo nível de sustentabilidade. No que se refere à sustentabilidade de cooperativa integral, o mesmo resultado é observado entre as cooperativas incluídas na amostra. O nível de sustentabilidade e a classificação estão em consonância com as estratégias adotadas e a estratégia certa é promovida no momento certo.

### MOTS-CLÉS:

DURABILITÉ, ÉCONOMIE  
SOCIALE, ENVIRONNEMENT,  
TABLEAU DE BORD.

### PALAVRAS-CHAVES:

SUSTENTABILIDADE,  
ECONOMIA, SOCIAL, MEIO  
AMBIENTE, CARTÃO DE  
PONTUAÇÃO.

## INTRODUCTION

### Background and Justification

Cooperatives are an old idea, but one that is more relevant than ever if we look ahead at the development challenges and opportunities the world faces over the coming decades. As the United Nations are about to agree Sustainable Development Goals which will set a global agenda, there is a real chance to make extreme poverty and deprivation history, to secure social inclusion and to reconcile economic and social objectives. In tackling all of these challenges, cooperatives can play a valuable role in turning the tide. Many of the poor and excluded are reached neither by conventional markets for goods and services nor by government. Cooperatives and other social economy enterprises have shown that they have the necessary reach.

A recent study by the ILO and the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) “Cooperatives and Sustainable Development Goals” highlights the contributions that cooperative enterprises are making to sustainable development and their potential to do much more: from creating employment and enhancing gender equality to providing clean energy and financial inclusion to ensuring food security and extending social protection. Many of the working poor, the hungry and the excluded are rural workers, often smallholder farmers. Cooperatives have an outstanding track record in overcoming multiple forms of exclusion in rural areas, but not only there. Cooperatives are present in all sectors of the economy and adaptable to a range of contexts. They respond to the triple bottom line of sustainable development: economic development, social justice, and environmental protection. For all these reasons, cooperatives are very much enterprises of the future which play an essential role in complementing conventional markets and government action. This is acknowledged explicitly in the outcome document of the Rio+20 Conference ‘The future we want’. The international community should bear this in mind when setting out the strategies and the means through which the Sustainable Development Goals can be realized (ILO, 2014).

Studies have shown that the cooperative enterprises across sectors have continued to grow and prosper during the financial crisis, and this is reaffirmed by the survey results. Among the respondents 68 per cent observed that the number of cooperatives has grown in their country or region during the past decade; 63 per cent noted that individual membership in cooperatives has increased; and 57 per cent perceived the number of people employed by cooperatives as having risen (ICA, 2011).

### Statement of the Problem

Cooperatives of the past were heavily criticized for being inefficient, discriminatory against the poor and women and institutions rife with corruption. Their record of success and sustainability varies across countries and sectors. As late as 1993, a World Bank (WB) review of cooperatives concluded they were not viable organizations due to inappropriate policy frameworks, excessive government interference and insufficient farmer capacity building (Rondot, 2004). However, the end of the Cold War, Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) and a dramatically altered political economy have had significant impact on the structure and organization of cooperatives. Moreover, evidence suggests that group projects are increasingly relied upon by national governments, bi- and multi-laterals and non-governmental agencies (NGOs) as the preferred model for rural development project implementation and poverty alleviation (Grootaert, 1998; Harris & de Renzio, 1997; World Bank, 1997). Thus, despite their meagre performance, the WB claims that they remain ‘the preferred form of organization, and perhaps the only organization with which rural people are familiar’ (Hussi *et al.*, 1993).

Inadequate enabling environment for cooperative development in many countries, either due to restrictive laws and regulations stemming from a legacy of state control, or from the absence of a cooperative legal framework 63 per cent of respondents observed that government support to cooperatives had either remained the same or declined in the past decade; Cooperatives’ limited engagement in articulating a global vision for sustainable development 29 per cent of respondents institutions’ contributions to sustainable development were reported to be at local and 35 per cent at national level, compared to 19 per cent at regional and 17 per cent at international level; and Persistent misconceptions on the cooperative business model among employers’ organizations, trade unions as well as research institutions, despite positive evidence on cooperatives’ contributions (ILO, 2013).



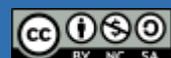
The success of cooperatives is in essence a function of three overlapping factors: its internal activities and operations; the wider policy environment; and local, national and international markets (Hedlund, 1988). Internal organization and structures can be sound; but the wider policy environment can encourage or discourage organization and provide incentives or disincentives for people to work collectively (Grootaert, 1998; Harris & de Renzio, 1997). National governments play an important role in formulating policies that encourage the growth and restructuring of cooperatives.

The unpredictable natures of markets in which commodities are traded have enormous impact on the success of cooperatives. Hedlund (1988) insightfully illustrates this point in his historical review of a coffee cooperative in Kenya, when he describes cooperatives as ‘two opposing organizational factors’. One is local participation, ‘which allows for members’ influence and thus facilitates order and continuity’. The second is ‘the world market with its uncontrollable development, representing disorder and discontinuity’. For example, though a cooperative can be instrumental in negotiating higher prices for coffee and increasing production, higher exports do not translated into higher incomes for smallholder farmers because of depressed world market prices. This is not a shortcoming of the cooperative, but an outcome of structural issues in the macro environment. Thus it is the precarious balance and management of these two pressures which shape and can ultimately determine the performance of the cooperative.

The legacy of past problems and more recent challenges including conflict, HIV/AIDS, rural poverty, underdevelopment, and unfair trade policies plague modern-day cooperatives in developing countries, threatening their ability to survive as viable commercial enterprises. Newly revived cooperatives are operating in an environment characterized by declining terms of trade, lack of market access, and unjust agricultural trade policies. For example, subsidized commodities from industrialized countries are displacing producers in many countries, affecting farmers’ competitive advantage and ability to serve local or national markets. The new food system is disproportionately, and negatively, affecting the livelihoods of many smallholder farmers. Economically, cooperatives are looked upon to facilitate the integration of small-scale farmers into local, regional and even international markets: they are a link between rural societies and the larger economy. Many restructured cooperatives are still in the nascent stage; thus it is difficult to predict their capacity to overcome these tremendous problems.

Under-capitalization and poor financial, accounting and management skills in cooperatives remain a challenge. In some countries, the government still maintains a paternalistic relationship with cooperatives. In others, cooperatives are heavily dependent on NGOs for credit, training and other technical support. The inherent contradiction between cooperatives’ social and economic objectives is a problem (Jiggins, 1988; Lele, 1981; Braverman *et al.*, 1991) for which the literature does not propose a clear solution. The dilemma is managing the balance between poverty-alleviation, promotion of social welfare, and equity —while building competitive, profit-oriented private sector institutions.

Cooperative revitalization programs in countries such as Ethiopia heavily stress sustainability and provide business skill training for the leadership and management. Cooperatives are business entities, by nature socially responsible and eco-friendly enterprises. Moreover, cooperatives lag behind in advancing a comprehensive sustainability agenda. It is a high time to have an attempt to investigate sustainability of cooperatives by considering three dimensions economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Hence this research study.



## Objectives

### *General Objective*

- To undertake a comprehensive survey on cooperatives sustainability.

### *Specific Objectives:*

- To analyze the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of cooperatives sustainability.
- To assess the cooperatives sustainability level by ranking among cooperatives in the study area.
- To examine the sustainability oriented competitive strategies adopted by sample cooperatives.

### Research Questions

- Are cooperatives sustainable in terms of economic, social, and environmental dimensions?
- What is the cooperatives sustainability level by ranking?
- How do cooperatives adopt sustainability oriented competitive strategies?

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Cooperatives and Sustainability

In a general sense, sustainability is the capacity to support, maintain or endure. Since the 1980s, the concept of sustainability has evolved to mean the integration of environmental, economic and social dimensions. Co-operatives here again are the forerunners of modern sustainability. By placing human need at their centre, they respond to today's crises of sustainability and deliver a distinctive form of shared value. According to Todor Ivanov – Secretary-General of Euro Coop, “With concern for the community a founding principle, sustainability underpins everything co-operatives do. By looking beyond the short-term goal of maximising profit regardless of the consequences, many are starting to look to our model of business as an alternative to traditional forms.”

One of the goals of the International Co-operative Alliance's Blueprint for a Co-operative Decade is to “position co-operatives as builders of sustainability”. The co-operative sector needs to explain and show to the world that sustainability is part of its intrinsic nature, and that co-operative enterprises make a positive contribution to sustainability.

As part of this, the Alliance commissioned a [scan](#) of co-operatives from different sectors and regions around the world to see how closely linked they are to sustainability. The report concluded that co-operatives embed sustainability into their operating model and values and that the United Nations can and should recognise this. Indeed, in a resolution adopted in December 2001, the UN urged governments to encourage and facilitate “the establishment and development of co-operatives, including taking measures aimed at enabling people living in poverty or belonging to vulnerable groups to engage on a voluntary basis in the creation and development of co-operatives”.

The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) held their annual conference in Cape Town during November 2013. One of the presentations at this conference included reporting on the results of a partnership project, between Community Research Connections and the Sustainability Solutions Group that investigated the relationship between the cooperative model and sustainable development. This research employed a unique methodology to compare key concepts distilled from seminal literature on sustainability to (firstly) the cooperatives principles and (secondly) websites and annual reports from various cooperatives around the world. As this was a global scan, the study was limited in the manner that it did not visit the cooperatives on-the-ground and thus could not validate whether cooperatives are actually acting in a sustainable manner; however, this work served as an initial step to see if cooperative model inherently leads to thinking and speaking about sustainability. Some of the main observations from the research include: Co-operatives are involved in the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability; the co-operative principles are more closely aligned with the social dimensions of sustainability; similarly, co-operatives websites and annual reports (overall) most strongly related to social aspects of sustainability;



in communicating their efforts on sustainability, co-operatives understate their efforts on Principles 1, 2 and 3; a co-operative is sustainable when it is an economically viable business that fully implements the seven co-operative principles with socially responsible, and maintains or regenerates the ecosystem in which they are embedded; co-operative associations lag behind co-operatives in advancing a comprehensive sustainability agenda; of the cooperative principles, concepts related to principle 5 (education, training, knowledge sharing), principle 6 (cooperation among cooperatives), and principle 7 (sustainable community development) were strongly communicated; cooperatives websites highlighted sustainability concepts, whereas in the annual reports, sustainability concepts were discussed in context with items (e.g., items relating business operations) (CRC, ICA 2013).

Perusal of the literature available it is understood that there are few studies undertaken related to sustainability of cooperatives. Moreover, a comprehensive research on cooperatives sustainability by considering economic, social, and environmental dimensions of cooperative sustainability is absent in Ethiopian context, and hence this research study.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Description of Study Area

#### General Features of West Shoa zone

West Shoa Administrative zone is one of the 18 zones of Oromia regional state.

##### *Location*

Located between astronomical grids of 8056'N-9056'N latitude and 37017'E-38°45'E longitude. It extends from North to South and East to West 310 km and 200km respectively.

##### *Boundaries*

It is bounded by:

- East Wellega and Horo Guduru Wellega zone in the West and North West.
- Jimma zone in the South West.
- South west Shoa zone in the South & South East.
- Oromia special zone surrounding Finfinnee city in the east.
- North Shoa zone in the East and North.

##### **Administrative divisions**

-18 districts and Ambo town administration (level B), 529 rural and 36 urban kebeles.

- 27 different level town administrations.

## TOTAL AREA OF THE ZONE

- 14,921.19km<sup>2</sup> constituting 4.15 percent of the region's total area.
- The largest district is G/Beret and the smallest is Tikur Inchini.

##### *Elevation*

- Varies from 1000-3500 meters above sea-level.

### *Climatic division*

- Tropical, warm & temperate.
- Distribution of mean annual rainfall fluctuates between 813.2-1,699mm.

### *Natural resources*

- The zone is endowed with many minerals and natural resources.

Some of the identified minerals include:

- |               |                  |          |             |
|---------------|------------------|----------|-------------|
| • Gravel      | -Mineral water   | -Granite | -Salt       |
| • Sand        | -Ambo Sand stone | -Sulpher | -Pumice     |
| • Ignim brite | -Silicate        | -Gold    | -Lime stone |
| • Scoria      | -Gypsum          | -Coal    | -Millstone  |
| • Basalt      | -Iron            | -Marble  | -Crude oil  |

-Gun powder

- The zone has three drainage basins, Abay, Gibe and Awash Rivers.

### *Soil type*

- Rend zinzans.
- Haplic and luvic phaeozems.
- Chromic and orthic luvisols.
- Dystric nitosols.
- Chromic and Pellic vertisols.

Most of the soils of the zone have good agricultural potential.

### *Population*

As per the population and housing census conducted in 1999, and projected in 2002 the population of the zone is **2,134,359** out of which over **1,736,244** (88.7 %) are rural and **221,634** (11.3 %) live in urban area.

### *Materials (facilities)*

The study was undertaken by survey method with both quantitative and qualitative approach whereby primary data were collected from members of cooperatives, KIIs, and FGD participants. For this purpose, a Semi-Structured Interview Schedule were prepared and administered as a data collection instrument, and Checklist was used to elicit information from KIIs (Woreda and Zonal Cooperative Promotion Bureau officials) and FGD participants (management committee of selected cooperatives).

## METHODOLOGY

Since the proposal intends to analyze the sustainability of cooperatives, field survey method was followed. Multi-stage sampling method was adopted to select study area, cooperatives and respondents. At the first stage, among 18 woredas in west shoa zone, Dendi woreda was selected based on the justification that there is high concentration of agricultural cooperatives. At the second stage with the justification of more membership, access and availability of data, out of 23, six cooperatives were selected. The sample respondents' size was determined by Taro (1967) formulae as below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(\epsilon)^2} = \frac{N}{1 + N(0.1)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{7611}{1 + 7611(0.1)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{7611}{77.11}$$

n = 98.70, by adding and rounding off = 100  
95 % confidence level and p=0.5 are assumed

The sample size was 100, and adopting PPS members from each cooperative were selected.

**Table 1: Sample Cooperatives and Respondents**

S.No	Name of the Cooperative	Male	Female	Total	Sample
1	Gabaa Dilbataa	1482	83	1565	21
2	Oolankomii	1477	45	1522	20
3	Waamura Meexii	1189	51	1240	16
4	Boddaa	1053	61	1114	15
5	Asgorii	1095	80	1175	15
6	Barooda Laga Baatuu	936	39	975	13
	Total	7232	379	7611	100

Source: Dendi Woreda Cooperative Promotion Office, 2016

## Method of data Analysis

The data were analyzed by using both quantitative and qualitative approach. The sustainability of cooperatives was analyzed by sustainability score card approach advocated by Measuring Cooperative Difference Research Network (MDCRN), Canada with sustainability Indicators which are combined sets of environmental, economic and social performance indicators. For analysis, descriptive statistics like frequency, percentage, and mean was used.

Moreover, for data analysis and assessment of sustainability level for ranking of cooperatives, Morris Inequality Index was used. This index is among the newest formal model used in world. In Morris model using available information for each cooperative, developmental condition (sustainability) of each cooperative according to each of selected index was identified and finally the mean of index sum using development index analyse method was determined simply but in fitted way. Then it dealt with to rank the cooperatives. The calculation manner of this index is as follow:

$$Y_{ij} = \frac{X_{ij} - X_{ij}(\min)}{X_{ij}(\max) - X_{ij}(\min)} \times 100$$

Where,  $X_{ij}(\min)$  and  $X_{ij}(\max)$  are the lowest and highest values the variable X can attain, respectively.  $Y_{ij}$  is Morris Inequality Index for each variable and  $X_{ij}$  is amount of variable in each cooperative.

The important point in this model is that the applied indexes must be homodirection. The main developmental index may calculate through this formula:

$$DI = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n Y_{ij}}{n}$$

Where, n is the number of the studied indexes and DI is the main developmental index. Morris Inequality Index ranges between 0 and 100 where it is closer to 100, the more is development range ie., sustainability level.

For analysing coop sustainability, different attributes were studied under each sustainability dimension of cooperatives. To assess coop sustainability level, Morris Inequality Index was used. The results from Morris Inequality Index indicated that economic sustainability of agricultural cooperatives which were estimated based on certain attributes based on 36 statements, was ranging from a minimum of 20 % to a maximum of 87 %, so that sampled cooperatives were allocated the least and the most economic sustainability index, respectively. The social sustainability of agricultural cooperatives was estimated based on certain attributes based on 25 statements, was ranging from a minimum of 20 % to a maximum of 81 %, so that sampled cooperatives were allocated the least and the most social sustainability index, respectively. In the same way the environmental sustainability of agricultural cooperatives was estimated based on certain attributes based on 29 statements, was ranging from a minimum of 17 % to a maximum of 53 %, so that sampled cooperatives were allocated the least and the most environmental sustainability index, respectively. The overall cooperative sustainability of agricultural cooperatives was estimated based on average score percentage of three sustainability dimensions, was ranging from a minimum of 19 % to a maximum of 69 %, so that sampled cooperatives were allocated the least and the most economic sustainability index, respectively. So, separate index was developed for each sustainability dimension to have level and rank for sampled cooperatives, and arriving at average score percentage the cooperative sustainability level and ranking were given to cooperatives. According to development coefficient (each sustainability dimension and overall coop sustainability), agricultural cooperatives were classified into five levels: sustainable (80-100), slightly sustainable (60-79), moderate (40-59), slightly unsustainable (20-39) and unsustainable (0-19). Ranking was given in the order the cooperatives percentage scored for each sustainability dimension and overall coop sustainability. Sustainability oriented competitive strategies were examined by descriptive statistics based on the responses given by the respondents. The sequence / order of cooperatives can be seen as in the order listed in the sampling table 1.

## Results and Interpretation

**Table 2: Economic Sustainability Dimension of Cooperatives**

Coop Level	Coop 1	Coop 2	Coop 3	Coop 4	Coop 5	Coop 6	All coops
Low (1-60)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Medium (61-120)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	16 (44.4)	01 (02.8)	15 (41.7)	04 (11.1)	36 (36.0)
High (121-180)	21 (32.8)	20 (31.3)	0 (0.0)	14 (21.9)	0 (0.0)	09 (11.1)	64 (64.0)
Total	21	20	16	15	15	13	100

Figures in brackets are percentage to row total

Table 2 reveals the economic dimension of cooperative sustainability of sampled agricultural cooperatives as opined by the member respondents. Coop 1, Coop 2, Coop 4, and Coop 6 are at the high level of cooperative sustainability in terms of economic dimension followed by Coop 3 and Coop 5 at the medium level. As for all cooperatives, majority 64 percent of the respondents opined that their cooperatives are at high level of cooperative sustainability in terms of economic dimension.

**Table 3: Social Sustainability Dimension of Cooperatives**

Coop Level	Coop 1	Coop 2	Coop 3	Coop 4	Coop 5	Coop 6	All coops
Low (1-42)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	16 (43.2)	01 (02.7)	15 (40.5)	05 (13.5)	37 (37.0)
Medium (43-82)	21 (33.3)	20 (31.7)	0 (0.0)	14 (22.2)	0 (0.0)	08 (12.7)	63 (63.0)
High (83-125)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Total	21	20	16	15	15	13	100

Figures in brackets are percentage to row total

Table 3 reveals the social dimension of cooperative sustainability of sampled agricultural cooperatives as opined by the member respondents. Coop 1, Coop 2, Coop 4, and Coop 6 are at the medium level of cooperative sustainability in terms of social dimension followed by Coop 3 and Coop 5 at the low level. As for all cooperatives, majority 63 percent of the respondents opined that their cooperatives are at medium level of cooperative sustainability in terms of social dimension.

**Table 4: Environmental Sustainability Dimension of Cooperatives**

Coop Level	Coop 1	Coop 2	Coop 3	Coop 4	Coop 5	Coop 6	All coops
Low (1-48)	21 (31.3)	20 (29.9)	01 (01.5)	15 (22.4)	02 (03.0)	08 (11.9)	67 (67.0)
Medium (49-98)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	15 (45.5)	0 (0.0)	13 (39.4)	05 (15.2)	33 (33.0)
High (99-145)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Total	21	20	16	15	15	13	100

Figures in brackets are percentage to row total

Table 4 reveals the environmental dimension of cooperative sustainability of sampled agricultural cooperatives as opined by the member respondents. Coop 3, and Coop 5 are at the medium level of cooperative sustainability in terms of environmental dimension followed by Coop 1, Coop 2, Coop 4, and Coop 6 at the low level. As for all cooperatives, majority 67 percent of the respondents opined that their cooperatives are at low level of cooperative sustainability in terms of environmental dimension.

**Table 5: Overall Coop Sustainability of sampled cooperatives**

Coop Level	Coop 1	Coop 2	Coop 3	Coop 4	Coop 5	Coop 6	All coops
Low (1-42)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	16 (55.2)	0 (0.0)	12 (41.4)	01 (03.4)	29 (29.0)
Medium (143-285)	21 (29.6)	20 (28.2)	0 (0.0)	15 (21.1)	03 (04.2)	12 (16.9)	71 (71.0)
High (285-427)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Total	21	20	16	15	15	13	100

Figures in brackets are percentage to row total

Table 5 reveals the overall cooperative sustainability of sampled agricultural cooperatives as opined by the member respondents. Coop 1, Coop 2, Coop 4, and Coop 6 are at the medium level of overall cooperative sustainability followed by Coop 3 and Coop 5 at the low level. As for all cooperatives, majority 71 percent of the respondents opined that their cooperatives are at medium level of overall cooperative sustainability.

**Table 6: Economic Sustainability level and ranking of sampled cooperatives**

Level of Economic Sustainability	Agricultural Coops (% SCORE / RANK)
Sustainable (80-100)	Coop 1 (87 % / 1), Coop 2 (84 % / 2)
Slightly Sustainable (60-79)	Coop 6 (69 % / 3), Coop 4 (62 % / 4)
Moderately Sustainable (40-9)	Coop 5 (42 % / 5)
Slightly Unsustainable (20-39)	Coop 3 (20 % / 6)
Unsustainable (0-19)	---

Figures in brackets are percentage score and rank of agricultural coops

As per the analysis procedures stated in the method of data analysis the cooperatives are categorized into different levels of economic sustainability. The percentage scored and rank are given to each cooperative under study. Table 6 shows the economic sustainability level and ranking of cooperatives. Coop 1 (87 %) and Coop 2 (84 %) are at 'sustainable' range which are ranked as first and second respectively; Coop 6 (69 %) and Coop 4 (62 %) are at 'slightly sustainable' range which are ranked as third and fourth respectively followed by Coop 5 (42 %) as 'moderately sustainable' ranked fifth, and Coop 3 (20 %) as 'slightly sustainable' ranked sixth among achieved level of sustainability of all sampled cooperatives.

**Table 7: Social Sustainability level and ranking of sampled cooperatives**

Level of Social Sustainability	Agricultural Coops (% SCORE / RANK)
Sustainable (80-100)	Coop 6 (81 % / 1)
Slightly Sustainable (60-79)	Coop 1 (66 % / 2), Coop 2 (62 % / 3)
Moderately Sustainable (40-59)	Coop 4 (53 % / 4), Coop 5 (41 % / 5)
Slightly Unsustainable (20-39)	Coop 3 (20 % / 6)
Unsustainable (0-19)	---

Figures in brackets are percentage score and rank of agricultural coops

As per the analysis procedures stated in the method of data analysis the cooperatives are categorized into different levels of social sustainability. The percentage scored and rank are given to each cooperative under study. Table 7 shows the social sustainability level and ranking of cooperatives. Coop 6 (81 %) is at 'sustainable' range which is ranked first; Coop 1 (66 %) and Coop 2 (62 %) are at 'slightly sustainable' range which are ranked as second and third respectively followed by Coop 4 (53 %) and Coop 5 (41 %) as 'moderately sustainable' ranked fourth and fifth, and Coop 3 (20 %) as 'slightly sustainable' ranked sixth among achieved level of sustainability of all sampled cooperatives.

**Table 8: Environmental Sustainability level and ranking of sampled cooperatives**

Level of Environmental Sustainability	Agricultural Coops (% SCORE / RANK)
Sustainable (80-100)	—
Slightly Sustainable (60-79)	—
Moderately Sustainable (40-59)	Coop 1 (53 % / 1), Coop 2 (52 % / 2)
Slightly Unsustainable (20-39)	Coop 4 (35 % / 3), Coop 5 (34 % / 4), Coop 6 (26 % / 5)
Unsustainable (0-19)	Coop 3 (17 % / 6)

Figures in brackets are percentage score and rank of agricultural coops

As per the analysis procedures stated in the method of data analysis the cooperatives are categorized into different levels of environmental sustainability. The percentage scored and rank are given to each cooperative under study. Table 8 shows the environmental sustainability level and ranking of cooperatives. Coop 1 (53 %) and Coop 2 (52 %) are at 'moderately sustainable' range which are ranked as first and second respectively; Coop 4 (35 %), Coop 5 (34 %) and Coop 6 (26 %) are at 'slightly unsustainable' range which are ranked as third, fourth, and fifth respectively followed by Coop 3 (17 %) as 'unsustainable' ranked sixth among achieved level of sustainability of all sampled cooperatives.

**Table 9: Coop Sustainability level and ranking of sampled cooperatives**

Level of Coop Sustainability	Agricultural Coops (% SCORE / RANK)
Sustainable (80-100)	—
Slightly Sustainable (60-79)	Coop 1 (69 % / 1), Coop 2 (66 % / 2)
Moderately Sustainable (40-59)	Coop 6 (59 % / 3), Coop 4 (50 % / 4)
Slightly Unsustainable (20-39)	Coop 5 (39 % / 5)
Unsustainable (0-19)	Coop 3 (19 % / 6)

Figures in brackets are percentage score and rank of agricultural coops

As per the analysis procedures stated in the method of data analysis the cooperatives are categorized into different levels of overall coop sustainability. The percentage scored and rank are given to each cooperative under study. Table 9 shows the overall coop sustainability level and ranking of cooperatives. Coop 1 (69 %) and Coop 2 (66 %) are at 'slightly sustainable' range which are ranked as first and second respectively; Coop 6 (59 %) and Coop 4 (50 %) are at 'moderately sustainable' range which are ranked as third and fourth respectively followed by Coop 5 (39 %) as 'slightly unsustainable' ranked fifth, and Coop 3 (19 %) as 'unsustainable' ranked sixth among achieved level of sustainability of all sampled cooperatives.

**Table 10: Cooperative Sustainability Level & Ranking - Score Card Results**

Response Coop	Economic sustainability			Social sustainability			Environmental sustainability			overall coop sustainability		
	Score (%)	Level	Rank	Score (%)	Level	Rank	Score (%)	Level	Rank	Score (%)	Level	Rank
Coop 1	87	S	1	66	SS	2	53	MS	1	69	SS	1
Coop 2	84	S	2	62	SS	3	52	MS	2	66	SS	2
Coop 3	20	SUS	6	20	SUS	6	17	US	6	19	US	6
Coop 4	62	SS	4	53	MS	4	35	SUS	3	50	MS	4
Coop 5	42	MS	5	41	MS	5	34	SUS	4	39	SUS	5
Coop 6	69	SS	3	81	S	1	26	SUS	5	59	MS	3

S-Sustainable (80-100); SS-Slightly Sustainable (60-79); MS-Moderately Sustainable (40-59);  
SUS- Slightly Unsustainable (20-39); US-Unsustainable (0-19)

Table 10 shows the comprehensive coop sustainability by dimension level and ranking of cooperatives. As far as economic sustainability dimension is concerned, Coop1 is in the most sustainable condition with sustainable level and Coop 3 is the least with the level slightly unsustainable condition, whereas social sustainability dimension the most sustainable is Coop 6 with sustainable level and the least sustainable is Coop 3 with slightly sustainable level. With regard to environmental sustainability dimension Coop 1 is found to be the most sustainable condition with moderate sustainable level and Coop 3 is in the least sustainable condition with unsustainable level. As for comprehensive coop sustainability, Coop 1 (69 %) is at slightly sustainable level with first rank followed by Coop 2 (66 %) at slightly sustainable level with second rank, while Coop 3 is at unsustainable level with sixth rank among achieved level of sustainability of all sampled cooperatives.

## Competitive Sustainability Strategies adopted by sampled Cooperatives

As part of data collection process the research team wanted to elicit information on sustainability strategies adopted by the sampled cooperatives assuming and believing that cooperative sustainability level is associated with strategies practiced. Based on literatures reviewed five different sustainability strategies viz., safe, credible, efficient, innovation, and transformation have been used to elicit information on sustainability strategies adopted.

Strategy 'safe' aims at reducing and managing risks; strategies of the type 'credible' are tackling issues of image and reputation; the improvement of productivity and efficiency is possible by implementing the strategy 'efficient'; the 'innovative' strategy aims at differentiating cooperatives' products and services in the market; and 'transformative' strategy aims at creating new markets by shifting existing institutional frameworks.

By administering different statements under each strategy responses were received from the member respondents. In addition, KIIs and FGD results are also supplemented hereunder.

As for 'safe strategy' respondents revealed that Coop 1, Coop 2, and Coop 4 practice at a high level followed by Coop 5 and Coop 6 at moderate level, and Coop 3 at low level. The overall cooperatives on adoption of sustainability strategy 'safe' is 55 percent at high level followed by 32 percent at moderate level.

As for 'credible strategy' respondents revealed that Coop 1, Coop 2, and Coop 4 practice at a high level followed by Coop 6 at moderate level, Coop 3 and Coop 5 at low level. The overall cooperatives on adoption of sustainability strategy 'credible' is 59 percent at high level followed by 21 percent at moderate level, and 20 percent at low level.

As for 'efficient strategy' respondents revealed that Coop 1, Coop 2, and Coop 4 practice at a high level followed by Coop 5 and Coop 6 and Coop 3 at moderate level. The overall cooperatives on adoption of sustainability strategy 'efficient' is 61 percent at high level followed by 32 percent at moderate level.

As for 'innovative strategy' respondents revealed that Coop 1 and Coop 2 practice at a high level followed by Coop 3, Coop 4, Coop 5 and Coop 6 at moderate level. The overall cooperatives on adoption of sustainability strategy 'innovation' is 50 percent at high level followed by 40 percent at moderate level.

As for 'transformative strategy' respondents revealed that Coop 1, Coop 2, and Coop 4 practice at a high level followed by Coop 5 and Coop 6 and Coop 3 at moderate level. The overall cooperatives on adoption of sustainability strategy 'transformation' is 60 percent at high level followed by 37 percent at moderate level.

The key informants and FGD participants also reported the same results regarding all sustainability strategies with some difference. With regard to safe, efficient, and innovative strategies Coop 3 was in both moderate and low level of adoption ranging from 25 percent to 38 percent at low level and 62 to 75 percent moderate level of adoption. With regard to innovative strategy Coop 5 was also in both moderate (60 %) and low (40 %) level adoption. Coop 6 was in both high and moderate level of adoption regarding innovative (high 69.2 % and moderate 30.8 %) and transformative (high 76.9 % and moderate 23.1 %) strategies.

## Major Findings

### Coop Sustainability by dimension

- Majority 64 percent of the respondents opined that their cooperatives are at high level of cooperative sustainability in terms of economic dimension; majority 63 percent of the respondents opined that their cooperatives are at medium level of cooperative sustainability in terms of social dimension; majority 67 percent of the respondents opined that their cooperatives are at low level of cooperative sustainability in terms of environmental dimension; and majority 71 percent of the respondents opined that their cooperatives are at medium level of overall cooperative sustainability.

### Sustainability level and ranking of sampled cooperatives

- As for economic sustainability Coop 1 (87 %) and Coop 2 (84 %) are at 'sustainable' range which are ranked as first and second respectively; Coop 6 (69 %) and Coop 4 (62 %) are at 'slightly sustainable' range which are ranked as third and fourth respectively followed by Coop 5 (42 %) as 'moderately sustainable' ranked fifth, and Coop 3 (20 %) as 'slightly sustainable' ranked sixth among achieved level of sustainability of all sampled cooperatives.
- As for social sustainability Coop 6 (81 %) is at 'sustainable' range which is ranked first; Coop 1 (66 %) and Coop 2 (62 %) are at 'slightly sustainable' range which are ranked as second and third respectively followed by Coop 4 (53 %) and Coop 5 (41 %) as 'moderately sustainable' ranked fourth and fifth, and Coop 3 (20 %) as 'slightly sustainable' ranked sixth among achieved level of sustainability of all sampled cooperatives.
- As for environmental sustainability Coop 1 (53 %) and Coop 2 (52 %) are at 'moderately sustainable' range which are ranked as first and second respectively; Coop 4 (35 %), Coop 5 (34 %) and Coop 6 (26 %) are at 'slightly unsustainable' range which are ranked as third, fourth, and fifth respectively followed by Coop 3 (17 %) as 'unsustainable' ranked sixth among achieved level of sustainability of all sampled cooperatives.
- As for overall coop sustainability Coop 1 (69 %) and Coop 2 (66 %) are at 'slightly sustainable' range which are ranked as first and second respectively; Coop 6 (59 %) and Coop 4 (50 %) are at 'moderately sustainable' range which are ranked as third and fourth respectively followed by Coop 5 (39 %) as 'slightly unsustainable' ranked fifth, and Coop 3 (19 %) as 'unsustainable' ranked sixth among achieved level of sustainability of all sampled cooperatives.

## Comprehensive Cooperative Sustainability Level & Ranking - Score Card Results

- As far as economic sustainability dimension is concerned, Coop1 is in the most sustainable condition with sustainable level and Coop 3 is the least with the level slightly unsustainable condition, whereas social sustainability dimension the most sustainable is Coop 6 with sustainable level and the least sustainable is Coop 3 with slightly sustainable level. With regard to environmental sustainability dimension Coop 1 is found to be the most sustainable condition with moderate sustainable level and Coop 3 is in the least sustainable condition with unsustainable level. As for comprehensive coop sustainability, Coop 1 (69 %) is at slightly sustainable level with first rank followed by Coop 2 (66 %) at slightly sustainable level with second rank, while Coop 3 is at unsustainable level with sixth rank among achieved level of sustainability of all sampled cooperatives.

## Competitive Sustainability Strategies adopted by sampled Cooperatives

- As for 'safe strategy' respondents revealed that Coop 1, Coop 2, and Coop 4 practice at a high level followed by Coop 5 and Coop 6 at moderate level, and Coop 3 at low level.
- As for 'credible strategy' respondents revealed that Coop 1, Coop 2, and Coop 4 practice at a high level followed by Coop 6 at moderate level, Coop 3 and Coop 5 at low level.
- As for 'efficient strategy' respondents revealed that Coop 1, Coop 2, and Coop 4 practice at a high level followed by Coop 5 and Coop 6 and Coop 3 at moderate level.
- As for 'innovative strategy' respondents revealed that Coop 1 and Coop 2 practice at a high level followed by Coop 3, Coop 4, Coop 5 and Coop 6 at moderate level.
- As for 'transformative strategy' respondents revealed that Coop 1, Coop 2, and Coop 4 practice at a high level followed by Coop 5 and Coop 6 and Coop 3 at moderate level.
- The key informants and FGD participants also reported the same results regarding all sustainability strategies with some difference. With regard to safe, efficient, and innovative strategies Coop 3 was in both moderate and low level of adoption ranging from 25 percent to 38 percent at low level and 62 to 75 percent moderate level of adoption. With regard to innovative strategy Coop 5 was also in both moderate (60 %) and low (40 %) level adoption. Coop 6 was in both high and moderate level of adoption regarding innovative (high 69.2 % and moderate 30.8 %) and transformative (high 76.9 % and moderate 23.1 %) strategies. The overall observation on the adoption of strategies revealed that Coop 1, Coop 2, and Coop 4 are practicing sustainable strategies at a high level followed by Coop 5 and Coop 6 at a moderate level, and Coop 3 at moderate and low level depends on the strategy adopted. This evidenced with the findings on sustainability level and ranking found through analysis.

## CONCLUSION

Agricultural Cooperatives in the study area are involved in the economic, social, and environmental dimension of cooperative sustainability. From the foregoing analysis it can be concluded that the agricultural cooperatives do have better position with economic sustainability, to some extent social sustainability, but they do not have favourable situation in environmental sustainability so that the cooperatives are located at moderate and low level of sustainability condition. With regard to comprehensive cooperative sustainability the same result is seen among sampled cooperatives. It is evident that the sustainability level and ranking are in consonance with the sustainability strategies they adopted. There is a need to identify and develop a new vibrant cooperative economic model, which addresses the economic challenges cooperative stakeholders face, as well as the social and environmental challenges disturbing cooperative sustainability. It can be achieved only through practicing and adopting right sustainability strategies at right time effectively.

## Recommendations

By considering the responses been given by the respondents, KIIS, and FGD participants on the sustainability dimensions and strategies adopted by cooperatives, and based on the findings the following recommendations can be forwarded to make cooperatives more sustainable in their business and to improve the sustainability level of agricultural cooperatives in the study area.

- Cooperative principles and values are to be closely well aligned with the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of cooperatives. Cooperatives will be sustainable when they are economically viable business units that fully implement cooperative principles and values as socially responsible enterprises, and maintain or regenerate the ecosystems in which they exist and are embedded.
- Agricultural Cooperatives which are at moderate and low level of sustainability must adopt appropriate strategies to improve to the 'sustainable' level of cooperative sustainability with due attention and care.
- Particularly Coop 3 must take proper measures to implement appropriate sustainability strategy to improve the sustainability level since it is ranked sixth (last coop); Coop 5 and Coop 6 have to focus more on all five sustainable strategies at a high level, while Coop 4 on innovative strategy.
- Regards to economic sustainability of sampled cooperatives, they have to increase member economic involvement through increase in membership base and capital base to improve the business volume whereby increasing members' income. The cooperatives board must have a system to review financial statements and key ratios periodically, and bank covenants; should compare budgeted figure with actual result attained, which will have the effect on economic sustainability.
- Regards to social sustainability of sampled cooperatives, creation of social fund to undertake social projects and schemes, and CSR activities like supporting members and employees' children education, insurance, medical facilities for employees, and socialization of agricultural activities are advocated.
- Regards to environmental sustainability of sampled cooperatives, they should concentrate more on improving environmental sustainability in terms of organic farming, conservation and protection of environment, agricultural waste management, adhering to environment policy of the government, imparting farmers knowledge on agricultural and ecosystems whereby cooperatives can offer eco-friendly products and services to the community.
- Safe strategy can be adopted by means of training farmers to forecast, assess, manage, and avoid risks involved in agricultural activities.
- Cooperatives must foster credibility by enhancing reputation which is a non-tangible asset creates value and attracts suitable members and employees whereby satisfies customers. Through the value created cooperatives image in the society can be built.
- Cooperatives must evolve efficient strategies like best agricultural practices by learning and adopting from other successful cooperatives, proper utilisation of resources to enhance productivity in all means with socio, eco-efficiency application.
- It is advocated to go with innovative strategies like product differentiation / improvement with socially and eco-friendly product innovation. Sustainable value added agricultural produces, products and services through sustainable supply chain are better to market by cooperatives.
- Cooperatives should evolve with transformative strategy to create new market with institutional change within human needs, mobility of goods, create sustainable standards, product labels, "Coop" brand products and services.



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# The social disintegration from a mixed approach of quantitative and qualitative analysis



## La desintegración social desde un enfoque mixto de análisis cuantitativo y cualitativo

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### ABSTRACT:

This paper aims to analyze, through a quantitative and qualitative approach, social categories related to vulnerability. This reflection is based on the analysis of concepts that are part of the sociology of poverty, exclusion, and social vulnerability, with contributions from the theory of intersectionality and the concept of social disintegration. Through this approach, vulnerability is a plural concept that results from the intersection of social positions, life experiences, and skills. In addition to the analysis of secondary data, the characteristics of social groups in situations of vulnerability will be examined through interviews with professionals who carry out their daily monitoring. The results indicate that social vulnerability results from the intersection of socio-demographic and economic factors that weaken the educational and professional trajectory of people in situations of vulnerability, particularly about their social and emotional competencies.

### RESUMEN:

Este trabajo tiene como objetivo analizar, a través de un enfoque cuantitativo y cualitativo, las categorías sociales relacionadas con la vulnerabilidad. Esta reflexión se basa en el análisis de conceptos que forman parte de la sociología de la pobreza, la exclusión y la vulnerabilidad social, con aportes de la teoría de la interseccionalidad y el concepto de desintegración social. A través de este enfoque, la vulnerabilidad es un concepto plural que resulta de la intersección de posiciones sociales, experiencias de vida y habilidades. Además del análisis de datos secundarios, se examinarán las características de los grupos sociales en situación de vulnerabilidad a través de entrevistas a profesionales que realizan su seguimiento diario. Los resultados indican que la vulnerabilidad social resulta de la intersección de factores sociodemográficos y económicos que debilitan la trayectoria educativa y profesional de las personas en situaciones de vulnerabilidad, en particular sobre sus competencias sociales y emocionales.

### RÉSUMÉ

Ce travail vise à analyser, à travers une approche quantitative et qualitative, les catégories sociales liées à la vulnérabilité. Cette réflexion est fondée sur l'analyse de concepts qui font partie de la sociologie de la pauvreté, de l'exclusion et de la vulnérabilité sociale, avec des apports de la théorie de l'intersectionnalité et du concept de désintégration sociale. Grâce à cette approche, la vulnérabilité est un concept pluriel qui résulte de l'intersection des positions sociales, des expériences de vie et des compétences. En plus de l'analyse de données secondaires, les caractéristiques des groupes sociaux vulnérables seront examinées dans le cadre d'entretiens avec des professionnels qui en assurent le suivi quotidien. Les résultats indiquent que la vulnérabilité sociale résulte de l'intersection de facteurs socio-démographiques et économiques qui affaiblissent la trajectoire éducative et professionnelle des personnes en situation de vulnérabilité, notamment sur leurs compétences sociales et émotionnelles.

### RESUMO:

Este trabalho tem como objetivo analisar, por meio de um enfoque quantitativo e qualitativo, as categorias sociais relacionadas à vulnerabilidade. Esta reflexão fundamenta-se na análise de conceitos que fazem parte da sociologia da pobreza, exclusão e vulnerabilidade social, com contribuições da teoria da interseccionalidade e do conceito de desintegração social. Por meio desse enfoque, vulnerabilidade é um conceito plural que resulta da interseção de posições sociais, experiências de vida e habilidades. Além da análise de dados secundários, serão analisadas as características dos grupos sociais em situação de vulnerabilidade por meio de entrevistas com profissionais que realizam seu acompanhamento diário. Os resultados indicam que a vulnerabilidade social decorre da interseção de fatores sociodemográficos e econômicos que debilitam a trajetória educacional e profissional das pessoas em situação de vulnerabilidade, principalmente no que se refere às suas competências sociais e emocionais.

### KEYWORDS:

VULNERABILITY, SOCIAL  
DISINTEGRATION, SOCIAL  
ECONOMY

### PALABRAS CLAVE:

VULNERABILIDAD,  
DESINTEGRACIÓN  
SOCIAL, ECONOMÍA  
SOCIAL.

### MOTS-CLÉS:

VULNÉRABILITÉ,  
DESINTÉGRATION  
SOCIALE, ÉCONOMIE  
SOCIALE.

### PALAVRAS-CHAVE:

VULNERABILIDADE,  
DESINTEGRAÇÃO  
SOCIAL, ECONOMIA  
SOCIAL.



## TOWARDS AN INTERSECTIONAL THEORY OF SOCIAL VULNERABILITY

Recovering the legacy of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's theory (1989), we can affirm that social reality is organized in spaces defined by logics of power, with defined social roles and expectations. Poverty, as a place that characterizes people without power as a result of the privation of economic capital, is a phenomenon that is prevalent across all societies, so it must be anchored in a multidimensional perspective of analysis.

The study of poverty has its origins in Simmel's text entitled "The Poor", published in 1907, in which the author began by defining the social categories of "poor" and "poverty" through a relational approach, among those who have nothing and those who have everything, and it opened the way for reflection on the redistribution of income and the construction of social support measures (cit by Dallmann, 2016).

Poverty is not a static concept, proof of this is the emergence of the so-called "new poverty" that goes beyond the analysis of exclusively economic dimensions. The "new poverty" corresponds to a complex and plural phenomenon linked to the precariousness of work, the increase of individualism, and the weakening of social ties (Paugam, 2006). Without resources to guarantee their subsistence, people in situations of poverty request social support that contributes to the construction of negative stereotypes that weaken their identity. More than a vulnerable economic condition, poverty corresponds to a specific social and identity position. For example, high levels of schooling have for many years constituted an almost "immunity" to experiencing situations of poverty, and in contemporary times obtaining an academic degree is not synonymous of job integration or a non-precarious contract. With the economic crisis cycles, people with school capital became, like any other group, vulnerable and potential beneficiaries of social benefits.

Paugam (2006) emphasizes the processes of social disqualification that are characterized by a decline in social and professional belonging of people who are not in a precarious situation from an economic point of view. The theory of social disqualification looks at poverty as a social construction and social groups stereotyped with this condition, have their social status. The author argues that "poverty is the symbol of social failure and often translates into human existence, through moral degradation" (p. 24).

Social exclusion describes the decline of the bonds that individuals maintain with society. Social exclusion is "the extreme phase of the process of marginalization, understood as a 'descending' path, along which there are successive ruptures in the relationship of the individual with society" (Costa, 1998, p. 10). However, not all forms of exclusion explain a lack of access to all basic social systems. For example, an individual can be excluded from some social systems and not from others. Poverty does not always imply that there is also social exclusion, as an individual in a situation of poverty may have support networks (family, friends). Therefore, poverty and social exclusion are "different realities and they do not always coexist" (Costa, 1998, p. 10). Poverty can be defined as a form of social exclusion, but never the reverse.

As a complex phenomenon, vulnerability can affect social groups that, following their condition of exclusion/marginality, don't benefit from social rights, either by ignoring their existence, by inhibition, by ignorance about the form of access, or by the complexity associated with applications of benefits. It is a polysemic concept used in several scientific disciplines (Alwang *et al.*, 2001) that can't be reduced to institutional and administrative categorizations. This simplification often translates into a set of stereotyped traits that don't consider the diversity of identity factors and the experiences of each person (Lima & Trombert, 2017).

Vulnerability can also be a condition associated with individuals who are in the labor market and who, however, are subject to precarious work situations and low wages. Despite this, individuals who exercise a professional occupation have a lower risk of social vulnerability (Marques *et al.*, 2016).

In addition to access to social rights and working conditions, age is also considered an explanatory variable for the degree of vulnerability of individuals and social groups. In this analysis and for other social groups, it is important to consider other variables such as social support network, family dynamics, material resources, income, and level of education. Groups that are in a situation of vulnerability are those that are exposed to new social risks such as children, young people, working women, families with young children, and people with reduced skills or who do not fit the new work paradigm (Zimmermann, 2017).

The concept of vulnerability lacks stability and consensus in terms of the indicators that contribute to its classification. Contributing to this situation is the fact that vulnerability is not only changing in time and space, but is also dependent on the interaction of different variables, which are not mutually exclusive.

It is from this perspective that we follow the contributions of the theory of intersectionality used in different contexts of research and intervention, precisely to shape the interactions and relationships between the different master categories that are sex/gender, class, ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, and disability (Nogueira, 2017). Here we use it to understand and characterize vulnerable groups. The intersectional approach doesn't cover the set of individual life paths; however, it allows coupling, from the theoretical and intervention point of view, contributions that integrate the diversity of experiences and the nuances specific to the various issues under analysis, thus being an approach specific and more holistic (David-Bellemare & Williams, n.d., p. 13-14; Nogueira, 2017, p. 141).

Work takes on a relative centrality in people's lives (Ramos, 2000; Vázquez, 2008) and is a structuring element in interpersonal relationships, between groups and organizations. It plays a guiding role in daily life, in interaction, and in people's identity and social position and also in obtaining income, enabling the acquisition of goods and services (Dias, 1997 cit by Marques, 2000). Until the 1970s, when the economic paradigm shift took place, the central concern of professional insertion focused on the transition to the job market, especially among young people, in the last decades there is a change in the processes of transition to the labor market and that extends to various social groups.

We refer to the effects associated with the consolidation of the knowledge society, globalization, demographic aging, and the affirmation of the technological and digital revolution and which have broadened the typology of situations that tend to keep people away from work or a stable and dignified job.

There are several changes identified by the European Commission (2017) in recent years in the European context, namely: i) the increase in jobs in the service sector; ii) the transition from a life-long job to experiences of various careers, iii) the increase in teleworking; iv) the European mobility of workers to live and work in another Member State and v) more flexible forms of work, such as part-time work (European Commission, 2017, p. 17). In addition, the expectation of creating new jobs in the future, according to the World Economic Forum (2016) "65% of children entering primary school today will end up working in completely new types of work that do not yet exist" (p. 3).

Who are the most vulnerable groups? The answer to this question is complex and not watertight. There is a heterogeneity associated with the experiences of vulnerability and which are the result of sociodemographic trajectories that place people more subject to exclusion processes (Costa *et al.*, 2018). Social groups in situations of vulnerability are social constructions whose meanings must include a previous note because their simplification may contribute to stereotypes that are indifferent to the specificities of identity and the life trajectories of each one (Lima & Trombert, 2017, p. 17). Intensive research shows that although this concept is widely used, it lacks debate and consensus in the field of social sciences. Law No. 4/2007 of the General Bases of the Portuguese Social Security System illustrates the lack of clarity regarding the concept when referring to the importance of social action for "social exclusion or vulnerability" and for "protection of the most vulnerable groups, namely children, young people, people with disabilities and the elderly, as well as other people in a situation of economic or social need". This definition is quite broad and the social categories quite broad.

The social groups identified as most vulnerable vary over time, as can be seen by comparing the list of disadvantaged social groups in a study conducted at the end of the 20th century (Capucha *et al.*, 1999) and in a study published in 2018 (Costa *et al.*, 2018). In the first study, and as an example, reference is made to: Long-term unemployed, single-parent families, young people at risk, drug addicts and ex-drug addicts, detainees and ex-prisoners, minority ethnic and cultural groups, people with low qualifications, members of circles of installed poverty, homeless people and people with disabilities. From the analysis of the problems for each of the ten identified groups, Capucha *et al.* (1999) presents a categorization of them around four types of situations of vulnerability, namely: the weak qualifications and competences, the accommodation to installed poverty circles, the adoption marginal ways of life and different specific handicaps.

In the second study, the following social groups in situations of vulnerability are mentioned: poor workers, unemployed, informal caregivers, disabled for work due to illness, challenged and elderly people in a situation of vulnerability. Having followed an eminently qualitative approach, this study sought to perceive the self-perception of the situation of vulnerability from the narratives of the people themselves, with emphasis on reduced schooling, insufficient material conditions, precarious and fluctuating professional trajectories, health and well-being problems, weak network of sociability and insufficient social support in relation to needs.

According to the Commission Regulation (EU) N.º 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market, there are several categories of vulnerable adults (Commission Regulation, 2014, p. 17) (3) ‘worker with disabilities’ means any person who: (a) is recognised as worker with disabilities under national law; or (b) has long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment(s) which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in a work environment on an equal basis with other workers; (4) ‘disadvantaged worker’ means any person who: (a) has not been in regular paid employment for the previous 6 months; or (b) is between 15 and 24 years of age; or (c) has not attained an upper secondary educational or vocational qualification (International Standard Classification of Education 3) or is within two years after completing full-time education and who has not previously obtained his or her first regular paid employment; or (d) is over the age of 50 years; or (e) lives as a single adult with one or more dependents; or (f) works in a sector or profession in a Member State where the gender imbalance is at least 25 % higher than the average gender imbalance across all economic sectors in that Member State, and belongs to that underrepresented gender group; or (g) is a member of an ethnic minority within a Member State and who requires development of his or her linguistic, vocational training or work experience profile to enhance prospects of gaining access to stable employment.

This reflection corroborates the relevance of the theory of intersectionality —with origins in Anglo-American black feminism through its spokesperson Crenshaw— and whose approach calls for the perspective of the various dimensions of vulnerability that intersect with each other and that tend to affect individuals and social groups of different ways. Therefore, vulnerability results not only from a characteristic of an individual, but from the sum of various positions and social roles it occupies in society.

## DATA AND METHODS

This paper results from two doctoral works in progress in the doctoral program in Social Economy (Cooperatives and Non-Profit Entities), at University of Valencia, in Spain. The study A focuses specifically on youth people and study B on adult supported by professionals to their social and labour integration. Its general objective is to characterize situations of vulnerability in Portugal linked to phenomena of “social disintegration” (Paugam, 2006).

Although the vulnerability is often analyzed as a condition of specific social groups, we intend to reinforce the debate that focuses on the multidimensionality of the situation of vulnerability. This approach calls for a deconstruction of the vulnerability analysis paradigm itself, a changing condition throughout history and from society to society. It is also a condition influenced by specific social issues such as economic downturns. Even though it brings together regularities that describe people in these conditions, it is not an impermeable concept and its attribution is not at all mechanical. The relevance of this reflection is reinforced, as we will see later, by the discourse of the technicians who follow disadvantaged people and the contributions of the technicians demonstrate the volatility of this condition.

The specific objectives are first of all to identify working age social groups that are in a situation of social vulnerability, justifying, based on the literature review, this condition. We focus our analysis on people of working age as it is also pertinent to understand, from the more macro point of view of the two ongoing doctoral works, the relevance of the social economy in the socio-professional inclusion of these audiences. Therefore, we do not include children (individuals between 0 and 14 years old) and elderly (individuals aged 65 and over).

Second, we intend to describe the trend of the evolution of indicators that reveal a social vulnerability in Portugal and the European Union. And thirdly, and lastly, it is our purpose to characterize these social groups based on the data collection carried out by professionals who support people in situations of vulnerability.

The concept of poverty, for example, describes the scarcity or the absence of material resources, emphasizing the condition of individuals’ economic disadvantage. A methodological strategy based on two aspects was used. The documentary analysis of secondary statistical data, whose information is not aggregated. Our analysis is about data from Eurostat about the European Union, in general, and in particular, in Portugal. We selected specific periods that correspond to 5 different economic periods, before the Eurozone public debt crisis, during, and after. It is similarly relevant to examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the groups in question. With this time variable, it is our purpose to understand how periods of economic recession affect the greater or lesser vulnerability of certain social groups.

The second aspect is the content analysis of interviews conducted in study A with 15 Social Economy social workers,<sup>1</sup> and in Study B in 9 case studies<sup>2</sup> of Work Integration Social Enterprises regarding the main characteristics of these social groups. Data collection was carried out between May 2019 and May 2020.

It corresponds to a proposal for aggregated systematization of quantitative information confronted with qualitative information about who these individuals are, what variables explain their condition of social disadvantage, and what characteristics define their school and work trajectories.

The reflection on people who are in a situation of social disadvantage is long and has served to relevant debates about its causes and effects.

## THE VULNERABILITY IN NUMBERS IN PORTUGAL

We defined 6 variables that can explain situations of social vulnerability, based on the contributions about disadvantaged social groups proposed by Capucha *et al.* (1999) and additionally on variables that were mentioned directly or indirectly in the interviews carried out with insertion professionals. This definition focused on sociodemographic indicators that characterize the working-age population, that is, people who are potentially able to carry out an economic activity (Eurostat, 2021).

Therefore, the compilation of secondary statistical data presented below took into account the following sociodemographic variables: i) educational level, ii) age, iii) gender, iv) work status, v) ethnicity, and vi) physical condition and mental. The variables are not extinguished in those that are presented but are those in which there are statistical series. For example, we know that criminal history is a variable that contributes to the vulnerability of individuals, but there is a lack of statistical data on this dimension.

The period for the first three variables - level of education, age, and gender-focused specifically on the analysis of indicators that refer to people with low qualifications, women, and young people. The evolution of these indicators in years of economic growth, economic recovery, and financial crisis was examined. However, for the other categories, despite the exhaustive search, it was not possible to carry out this comparison, so it was decided to organize the remaining data in isolated tables. The current analysis was done on a data set extracted from a database recognized by the European Union for the production of statistical information by quality criteria, EUROSTAT and the OECD.

**Table 1 – Evolution of sociodemographic indicators between 2008 and 2020 in Portugal (%)**

		2008	2013	2016	2019	2020
Education	Unemployment rates by less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)	7,9 %	17,4 %	12,1 %	6,9 %	6,5 %
	Unemployment rates by upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3-4)	7,8 %	17,4 %	12,3 %	7,2 %	8,4 %
	Unemployment rates by Tertiary Education (levels 5-8)	6,8 %	12,7 %	8,4 %	5,3 %	5,6 %
Women	Employment rate for men of working age – Women	67,1 %	62,3 %	67,4 %	72,7 %	71,9 %
	Employment rate for men of working age – Man	79,4 %	68,7 %	74,2 %	79,9 %	77,8 %
	Unemployment rate – Women	8,7 %	16,4 %	11,2 %	7,2 %	–
	Unemployment Rate – Men	6,5 %	16,0 %	11,0 %	5,8 %	–
Youth Young people from 15 to 29 yaers old	Jovens NEET	11,9 %	16,4 %	12,8 %	9,2 %	11,0 %
	Jovens desempregados	13,3 %	27,7 %	20,4 %	12,8 %	15,8 %
	Jovens desempregados de longa duração (12 meses ou mais)	13,3 %	27,7 %	20,4 %	12,8 %	15,8 %

Source: Statistics Eurostat, 2021; OECD, 2021.

1 The interviews were codes by number from E01 to E15.

2 The case studies were coded Alfa, Beta, Gama, Delta, Kapa, Lambda, Omega, Iota and Zeta.

According to table 1, the general trend is that, as the educational level increases, the unemployment rate decreases. The 2020 economic downturn associated with the COVID-19 pandemic affects people with education between levels 3 and 4 more strongly, compared to people between levels 0 and 2, a difference of almost 2 %. One possible explanation is the concentration of the former in trade and tourism activities, which were heavily affected by this crisis. Another conclusion is that the unemployment rate was higher in 2013 and regardless of the level of education, a year in which the effects of the international financial crisis were most felt in Portugal.

When we analyse indicators about the presence of women in the labour market, we find the existence of gender disparities, such as the employment rate which is lower in the case of women, and the unemployment rate which is always higher when compared to men. Two important data, and since the existing data do not correspond to the periods under analysis, are in the first place. The gender wage gap in Portugal stands at 11.7 %. It means that women earn 11.7 % on average less per hour than men (the average gender wage gap in the EU is 14.1 %).

As can be seen in table 1, young people are a social category whose indicators of school and professional inclusion can be explained to the detriment of economic contexts. Let's see that all the indicators under analysis in the social category of young people are more worrying in the period of the greatest economic recession, that is, in 2012. In 2020, the effect of the decrease in economic activity due to the COVID-19 pandemic through the increase in the youth unemployment rate.

In the domain of youth, and regarding these indicators, there are no significant differences when comparing young women and young men. Likewise, the intersectionality of variables that can contribute to the so-called "yo-yo" trajectories is evident, that is, rotation between periods of occupation, unemployment, and training and, not infrequently, the return to situations of vulnerability (Pais, 2001). Based on the contributions of Machado Pais, we can conclude that youth corresponds to a changeable stage of life according to the context and period and that it depends on other factors that are related to the "sequence of changes in the relationships between the family, the school and work" (1990, p. 149). Furthermore, in this diversity of paths and stories that the concept of youth or youth brings together, social origins, motivations, and expectations.

**Table 2 – Sociodemographic indicators of migrants in 2017 in Portugal (%)**

		2017
Migrants	High (ISCED 5+) level of education by foreign-born	31 %
	High (ISCED 5+) level of education by native born	22 %
	Employment rate by foreign-born low- educated	73 %
	Employment rate by foreign-born highly- educated	85 %
	Employment rate by native born low- educated	68 %
	Employment rate by native born highly- educated	88 %

Source: OECD, 2018

The data in table 2 indicate that in Portugal foreign-born have more education than native born. Likewise, regardless of the level of education, the employment rate is higher among highly-educated compared to foreign-born.

In the EU-27, foreign citizens were more likely than nationals to be over-qualified: the over-qualification rate in 2019 for nationals was 20.8 % compared with 33.4 % for citizens of other EU Member States and 43.8 % for non-EU citizens.

**Table 3 – Disabled people by sex and labour status in 2012 in Portugal**

		2012		
		Women	Men	Total
Disabled people by labour status	Population total (Thousand)	716,5	508,0	1224,5
	Employed persons (Thousand)	96,0	77,6	173,5

Source: Statistics Eurostat, 2021

In 2012, there were 1224,5 thousand people with disabilities in Portugal, around 11% of total population. The female rate is about 58,5 %. Regarding the employment rate, the amount of people with disabilities is only of 14,2 %. We can therefore affirm that labour market is not inclusive for people with disabilities.

## QUALITATIVE DATA OF VULNERABILITY IN PORTUGAL

We will now present the preliminary results, following the two studies – A and B. In each one we identify regularities in data collection. Then, we analyze regularities and uniqueness between both studies.

In study A, interviews with social workers mainly reveal tangible dimensions of social vulnerability, although they prefer to intervene with at-risk youth. We figure 3 social workers do not specify the existence of variables that explain the need for their monitoring, in other words, it is observed the distancing of these professionals from concepts which, according to them, contribute to the worsening of the situation of vulnerability of these audiences.

When asked about the characteristics of this social group, these interviewees do not mention indicators of social belonging, education, material resources, or socio-emotional status that could justify the need for their intervention. Says one insertion agent, *“if you ask me what those kids are like, I always say they’re distressed kids. They are kids who need help, who need time, who need things that sometimes we can’t get, but they are distressed”* [E7].

Two other social workers refer to ambivalent characteristics that can define any social group, such as *“they are people with whom you can create a very easy relationship, in terms of creating bonds this is already more difficult”* [E09] and *“curious and resilient”* [E10].

The data point to the existence 6 categories of analysis from which social workers characterize the social groups they follow:

- 1) the social workers mostly characterize the vulnerability of their target group through socio-emotional skills. This means that 18 references were identified in total in the moments of collection of information that point to this dimension. This includes the low self-esteem manifested in this discourse, for example, *“they are not sure of themselves, they do not recognize themselves as having the skills to do anything that gives them some extra value. They don’t have confidence or self-esteem”* [E1]. A high emotional fragility because *“at an emotional level they have many needs”* [E4]. Communication problems, *“difficulty they have in expressing themselves, in saying what they feel and recognizing in others what they are feeling”* [E2]. And yet the transversal absence of interests and apathy *“has that history of thinking it’s not worth it “that’s what it is...”, conformism”* [E07];
- 2) socioeconomic context (n=11), namely the scarcity of financial resources to meet basic needs and accommodation in social houses or neighborhoods that contribute to stereotypes and that affect the way others look at themselves. In this regard, one insertion agent says *“they are unequal because they are born in the neighborhood, this is, therefore, a condition at the outset [...] the neighborhood is excluded from a territorial point of view [...] they have difficulty finding a job when they say they are from the neighborhood”* [E13];
- 3) school performance (n=8,) and here we understand learning difficulties, low levels of education, and low expectations about the academic path;
- 4) family support network (n=7), social workers who accompany young people exclusively emphasize this regularity quite frequently, pointing to situations of negligence, and the absence of poorly defined family roles that make young people assume premature responsibilities associated with adulthood, such as caring for younger brothers. Says an insertion agent *“they are young people with little accompaniment, they spend a lot*

*of their time alone, taking care of themselves and often their siblings. Therefore, they are left to themselves [...] ensure, for example, that the brothers eat” [E2];*

- 5) professional trajectory (n=5) marked by precarious and irregular employment, on the one hand, and low expectations regarding the definition of more stable and dignified trajectories;
- 6) ethnicity (n=6) *“at school level it is a population with accentuated learning difficulties, caused by the fact that Portuguese is not the mother tongue, most do not speak Portuguese correctly and have many difficulties that end up reflecting at school” [E04].*

Another regularity identified was the cycle of poverty that these groups experience and which are difficult to break. A social worker says *“there is a kind of snowball in these young people, especially here in this territory, and it is something that has been dragging on for years and years, that the story I tell now about a young person is almost the same one told by a young man who lived in this neighborhood 10 years ago” [E05].*

This finding that *“they are in repeated cycles of poverty” [E1]* and that they do not recognize themselves in a situation that they are not aware of” is transversal to several statements and reveals a very great difficulty in contributing to the social inclusion of these groups.

The possibility of childhood poverty remaining unchanged into adulthood is high (UNICEF, 2017; Diogo, 2021). Socioeconomic inequalities are difficult to break, especially in hereditary situations, which is why it is urgent to train professionals to adjust interventions to people’s profiles, rather than to available resources.

Regarding to study B, focused on 9 case studies of different kinds of Work Integration Social Enterprises, we start to present, for each one, the main target-groups:

**Table 4 | Main target group of case studies**

	Main target group
Alfa	People with disabilities
Beta	People with mental illness
Gama	Unemployed people
Delta	Unemployed people in situations of high vulnerability
Kapa	People with disabilities
Lambda	Unemployed people
Omega	Unemployed people + People with disabilities + people with addictive behavior
Iota	Unemployed people
Zeta	Unemployed people

Source: adapted from legal status of case studies

Table 4 represents a simple classification on main target groups of case studies, identified in the Social Economy Organisation legal status. As we can see, the categories are not specific. For six of them, the main target group are simple unemployed people, for four people with disabilities (including mental illness) and for on people with addictive behavior.

We will now present the data collected in each case studies, through interviews with the support team, and also observation of activities, mainly team meeting. Social workers from case studies identify characteristics around two main categories tangibles and intangibles.

For tangibles category, we put together the administrative characteristics, such as age, gender, employment status, recipient of social benefit, disability, mental illness. For illustrative purposes only, lets analyze the following four examples: i) for Delta case study the profile of the people supported is mainly male, aged over 40; ii) for Alfa case, working with young people with functional diversity, the coordinator explained that supported people have to be autonomous for coming from home to work, for using bathroom, etc.; iii) for Lambda case, the profile is defined as mostly long-term unemployed people with low qualifications; iv) for Iota case, the focus is on young NEETs or long-term unemployed with a low level of education.

But, for the all social workers those tangible characteristics are never the only ones. That's why they identify what we categorized as intangible issues. Social workers identify pathways of high inactivity, back and forth between employment and unemployment, and odd jobs in the informal economy *"experiences of six months, a year, right? And very long periods outside the labour market that makes, well, at the level of the curriculum, not very attractive, for example"* (E2-Delta). There is a lot of precariousness both in school and in labour market pathways and specifically women who *"since becoming pregnant, have become pregnant consecutively and have very low educational qualifications ... young people who have dropped out of education and have had very meagre professional experiences"* (E2-Omega).

socio-emotional skills are also a common profile among the target group. Indeed, characteristics such as lack of trust in labour market, in social work and even in him or herself are often mentioned by the interviewees: *"It is here that the person gains confidence in himself [...] is to trust himself/herself again, to start again, isn't it? This question of skills is extremely important for that. Because people are completely discredited in the labour market, they no longer believe. [...] And so there is a very big discredit in the system here, um... and therefore, also situations of behaviour of companies that were not the best, that did not pay certain hours [...] there is a very big discredit in vocational training"* (E2-Iota). Also low self-esteem and a negative self-image, especially regarding the relationship of supported people with education and training, with discourses such as *"I don't do well at school; my head doesn't work; I've never made it; [...] so, the problem is me"* (E1-Zeta). Associated to life paths marked by different difficulties, the target group present a profile that reveals some emotional fragility. Some of them don't have a support system *"it is a very emotionally unstable population [...]* *There has already been a very big cut here in terms of family too, because of age and because family relationships too, many of them have worn out"* (E5-Omega).

## CONCLUSION

The aggregated analysis of qualitative and quantitative data demonstrates that there are sociodemographic variables (education, gender, age, employment status, ethnicity, and physical and mental condition) that point to a greater propensity for situations of vulnerability. The sociodemographic indicators that explain vulnerability are closely associated with economic cycles (Diogo, 2021) as can be seen in the analysis of education, age, and gender indicators in the periods between 2008 and 2020.

At the same time there are qualitative dimensions identified by social workers that point to dimensions that, in addition to corroborating some of the quantitative variables, reveal another type of dimensions that characterize these audiences. This propensity is even more evident through the crossing of variables, through an intersectional perspective.

As for the qualitative data, it is observed that the social workers, from Study A, who work with young people use intangible dimensions to refer to the vulnerabilities of these target group, while the social workers from Study B who work with adults, despite referring to intangible dimensions, use more often tangible dimensions. One of the regularities found in both studies is that in the intangible dimensions of vulnerability, frailty and/or absence of social and emotional skills are most frequently reported.

In general, the quantitative and qualitative data point to intersectoral dimensions of vulnerability. As say Carmo *et al.* (2018, p.1) *"although income represents a fundamental aspect, it does not exhaust the multiple dimensions that contribute to the production and the persistence of inequalities. These are characterized by their multidimensionality about a different set of variables, sectors, and systems"*.

Under Perista and Batista (2010) it is argued that *"actors with responsibilities direct actions in social intervention critically exercise a questioning of the context(s) in which they work, and to which a clear awareness of some fundamental concepts can contribute a lot"* (p. 44). From the social workers speeches presented, it seems that tangible categories are absolutely not enough to handle the complexity of vulnerability phenomena. In fact, all of our interviewees defined a diverse and complex profile of the target group, which cannot be boiled down to mere administrative categories. As mentioned by one social worker, these target groups are in a place of *"social invisibility"*. So, it is not possible to homogenise a single profile, because there are a lot of different people in the invisibility.

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## Economía plural y economía social solidaria: Discutiendo los conceptos

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### ABSTRACT:

This article presents this trajectory, starting from the work of Milton Santos on the circuits in the urban economics in the underdeveloped countries and their relation to the popular economy. We also discuss the solidarity economy, which originated within the framework of European associativism, and in Brazil assumes peculiar contours when focusing on self-managed collective production. Finally, we discuss how the current Latin American debate articulates the questioning of the market society and the proposition of an “other economy” focused on work and on the plurality of economic principles. In this sense, “social and solidarity economy” would be, in peripheral and in central countries, a set of initiatives oriented to an ideal economic system, to replace the “economy of capital”.

### RESUMEN:

Este artículo presenta esta trayectoria, a partir del trabajo de Milton Santos sobre los circuitos de la economía urbana en los países subdesarrollados y su relación con la economía popular. También discutimos la economía solidaria, que se originó en el marco del asociativismo europeo, y en Brasil asume contornos peculiares al enfocarse en la producción colectiva autogestionada. Finalmente, discutimos cómo el debate latinoamericano actual articula el cuestionamiento de la sociedad de mercado y la propuesta de “otra economía” centrada en el trabajo y en la pluralidad de principios económicos. En este sentido, la “economía social y solidaria” sería, en los países periféricos y centrales, un conjunto de iniciativas orientadas a un sistema económico ideal, para sustituir la “economía de capital”.

### RÉSUMÉ :

Cet article présente cette trajectoire, à partir du travail de Milton Santos sur les circuits de l'économie urbaine dans les pays sous-développés et sa relation avec l'économie populaire. On a également discuté sur l'économie solidaire, qui a vu le jour dans le cadre de l'associationnisme européen, et au Brésil elle prend des contours particuliers en se concentrant sur la production collective autogérée. Enfin, on a discuté comment le débat latino-américain actuel articule la remise en question de la société de marché et la proposition « d'une autre économie » centrée sur le travail et sur la pluralité des principes économiques. En ce sens, « l'économie sociale et solidaire » serait, dans les pays périphériques et centraux, un ensemble d'initiatives orientées vers un système économique idéal, pour remplacer « l'économie de capital ».

### RESUMO

Este artigo apresenta esta trajetória, a partir do trabalho de Milton Santos sobre os circuitos da economia urbana nos países subdesenvolvidos e sua relação com a economia popular. Discutimos também a economia solidária, que se originou no quadro do associativismo europeu, e no Brasil assume contornos peculiares ao se focar na produção coletiva autogestionada. Por último, discutimos como o atual debate latino-americano articula o questionamento da sociedade de mercado e a proposta de “outra economia” centrada no trabalho e na pluralidade de princípios econômicos. Nesse sentido, a “economia social e solidária” seria, nos países periféricos e centrais, um conjunto de iniciativas voltadas a um sistema econômico ideal, em substituição à “economia de capital”.

### KEYWORDS:

POPULAR AND  
SOLIDARITY ECONOMY,  
SOCIAL ECONOMY,  
PLURAL ECONOMY,  
SOLIDARITY ECONOMY.

### PALABRAS CLAVES:

ECONOMÍA POPULAR Y  
SOLIDARIA, ECONOMÍA  
SOCIAL, ECONOMÍA  
PLURAL, ECONOMÍA  
SOLIDARIA.

### MOTS-CLÉS:

ÉCONOMIE POPULAIRE ET  
SOLIDAIRE, ÉCONOMIE  
SOCIALE, ÉCONOMIE  
PLURIELLE, ÉCONOMIE  
SOLIDAIRE.

### PALAVRAS-CHAVE:

ECONOMIA POPULAR E  
SOLIDÁRIA, ECONOMIA  
SOCIAL, ECONOMIA  
PLURAL, ECONOMIA  
SOLIDÁRIA.

## INTRODUCTION

The popular and solidary economy gained expression in Brazil in the 1990s, as a response of the popular classes to unemployment and the precariousness of work in progress. In the 2000s, it gained space in public policies and grew in organization and reach.

While at the end of the 20th century the Latin American debate was based on a diagnosis of the forms of production and work in these countries, in the present century it is more directly linked to the discussion about the coexistence between different economic principles, approaching the ideas of economics social and plural economy. The recent movement approaches the issues of the center and the periphery, emphasizing the challenge of economicism and in defense of an “other economy” marked by solidarity, sustainability and emancipation (Coraggio *et al.*, 2009a).

The present article presents this trajectory, based on Milton Santos reading about the economic circuits in the cities of underdeveloped countries and their relationship with the popular economy category. It is also discussed the solidarity economy, which has its origin in the framework of European socialist cooperativism, and which in Brazil takes on peculiar shapes by focusing on self-managed collective production. Finally, it discusses how the Latin American debate articulates the movement of questioning the market society and proposing an “other economy” centered on the coexistence between economic principles and focused on solidarity and the predominance of work over capital. In this sense, the “social and solidarity economy” would be, in both peripheral and central countries, a set of initiatives towards an ideal economic system, replacing the “capital economy” marked by the precariousness and commodification of labor.

## FROM THE LOWER CIRCUIT TO THE POPULAR ECONOMY AND THE URBAN SOLIDARITY

In the late 1970s, Milton Santos proposed a reading of cities in underdeveloped countries based on two economic circuits (or systems). The space of these countries, when organized and reorganized according to external interests, is configured as discontinuous, unstable and multipolarized. This creates a circuit of the urban economy highly benefited by modernizations, and another that only partially benefits, or does not benefit at all, from technical progress and the advantages associated with it.

The origin of this configuration would be in the industrialization and modernization processes - selective and incomplete - of the 20th century, guided by technology-intensive multinational firms that generate a limited number of jobs. The so-called “superior” circuit is composed mainly of capital-intensive activities, largely imitative, of large-scale production, articulated outside the city and the region, and with the main objective of capital accumulation. It is formed by trade and industry for export, modern urban industry, modern trade and services, banking, wholesale trade and transport. The “inferior” circuit, on the other hand, covers small-scale activities, mainly non-modern services supplied by small-scale commerce, labor intensive and with relevant creative potential and articulation in the city and region. It is primarily about small manufacturing production, mostly artisanal, and non-modern commerce, in addition to domestic activities.

The relationship between the two flow systems (circuits) of the urban economy is determined by general historical conditions, linked to the penetration of modern activities in the territory, and by the State, which acts as an intermediary between innovative agents and regional realities (Santos, 2008). It is the upper circuit that occupies a privileged position in the face of government support and credit. For this reason, lower circuit units often resort to mutual aid arrangements. The control of information and the support of the State apparatus work in favor of the upper circuit, which is able to “create” or “attract” demand through advertising. The lower circuit is based on consumption; it results from demand. As the demand of the entire population is directly influenced by the upper system and its networks, the dependency of the lower system is clear.

In the lower circuit, family and autonomous work, organized in small production units, prevails. While in the upper circuit prices are defined in oligopolized markets, in the lower one, bargaining and personal agreements prevail, leading to a greater margin of variation in prices. The notion of profit is also different between circuits. In the first case, capital accumulation is essential for the continuity of activity and the monitoring of technological advances. In the second, the logic of the short term prevails (Santos, 2008).

The circuits coexist in complementarity and competition, although the relationship of subordination between them is clear. Milton Santos rejects the notion of “dualism”, although he assumes this is the starting point of his theory. By refusing such a name, he clarifies that both circuits are the result of the same process: the dissemination of information and consumption that occurred in the second half of the 20th century and that leads to the transformation of the entire production apparatus. For him, what is verified are not forms of production with different technological ages coexisting in space. These are different ways of combining a new model of production, distribution and consumption, and the pre-existing situation: “it is an acceptance of modernization in different degrees” (Santos, 2008, p. 55).

Thus, Milton Santos distances himself from the argument of underdevelopment theories that income distinctions are attributable to different levels of productivity, as well as the replacement of the “traditional sector” by the “modern sector” as a natural part of the development process. These theories, strongly influenced by Lewis’s model of unlimited labor supply (Lewis, 1954), saw the traditional sector as “archaic” or “backward” and doomed to disappear in the wake of economic growth. Circuit theory proposes to break with the modern-traditional opposition, and also to consider, in addition to production, the spheres of consumption, distribution, employment, as well as the role of information and the State, in the configuration of formations economic-social.

Milton Santos approach clarifies that the existence of this set of productive units constitutes a component of the peripheral capitalist structures, fulfilling a fundamental and subordinate role, and being marked by a distinct internal rationality, heterogeneity and constant mutation. Contrary to what the dominant approach to the informal sector preached<sup>1</sup>, there would be no tendency to disappear or replace the lower circuit with the upper one, as long as there was formalization with the State or the improvement of technological levels. The lower circuit is not seen as a step in the development process to be overcome, but as a structural characteristic, fed into the system itself.

Still in the 1970s, other authors proposed an understanding of Latin American reality based on the logic of production and reproduction that existed there. In close perspective, Orlando Nuñez, Luis Razeto and Jose Luis Coraggio propose the category of popular economy. This would not be defined only by the social category of its actors (the poor or those excluded from the formal labor market), but by the quality of their relations and values (values of solidarity, cooperative relations) and their scale of organization, small enough to allow interpersonal economic relations, not necessarily mediated by the market and the competition. In emphasizing these aspects, they seek to differentiate the “popular urban economy” from the “informal urban system” (Coraggio, 2003).

The popular economy is thought of as the set of economic activities and social practices developed by the members of the working classes from the use of their own workforce and their own resources. These organizations are designed to provide and replace livelihoods, adding units of work, not capital investment (Kraychete, 2006). This economy is based on family work, self-employed, artisanal, on self-construction of housing, on the peasant economy. Its dynamics combines domestic production with market relations, in a diffuse connection between use values and exchange values that do not lead to disappearance or disconnection with the market. Work is the main productive factor of these units, whose internal organization involves associated production (cooperatives, associations, purchasing groups, local exchange systems), small family businesses and individual work (self-employed, “self-employed”), aimed at or not to the market.

For Coraggio (1994, 2000, 2003), the cells of the popular economy are the domestic units that depend mainly on the exercise of their work to reproduce themselves biologically and culturally<sup>4</sup>. The domestic unit, as an economic organization characteristic of the popular economy (founded on kinship, affinity, ethnic relations, etc.), organizes the resources and capacities of its members (its work fund) to manage the satisfaction of its needs, with the ultimate goal of reproducing life in the best possible conditions (expanded reproduction). While simple reproduction is equivalent to maintaining the life of the members of the domestic unit at a level accepted as a minimum, expanded reproduction denotes an improvement in quality of life over time, not only by increasing incomes, but also by access to public good, better quality of consumption, better standards of social relationship, better housing conditions, etc.

Lisboa (2004) identifies Milton Santos as a precursor to the popular economy category, as it takes up a set of characteristics that the author attributes to the lower circuit of the urban economy. For example, for Milton Santos, contrary to what the formal-informal dichotomy assumes, it is not a question of assuming the existence of a set of rational and coordinated decisions in opposition to another group of irrational and incorrect actions. The lower circuit is also provided with a rationality, and, furthermore, economic rationalities are always multiple.



The rationality of the popular economy differs from that of the capitalist economy, since the assumptions of accumulation and the objective of expansion - the greatest possible - of capital are not verified there. There, economic rationality is subordinated to the reproduction needs of domestic units, which implies, for example, difficulty in replacing workers and the great weight given to the labor factor in relation to capital: "Unlike companies that - in search of profit, competitiveness and productivity - they do not need workers, members of popular economic enterprises cannot 'fire' their sons, daughters, spouses or elderly people who gravitate to their surroundings" (Kraychete, p. 2006, 5).

For Razeto (1993), not every popular economy is one of solidarity, and neither is the solidarity economy necessarily popular, since solidarity in economic practice can also occur in other areas. "In the popular economy, there are embryos of what can be a solidary economy, because in the practices of the popular sectors we find an economic rationality founded on work and cooperation" (Lisboa, 2004, p. 15). This solidarity could be understood as an economic factor, insofar as cooperation can increase productivity, reduce costs and provide additional benefits, establishing what the author calls "economies of association". It would be present, for example, in the free transfer of information and knowledge, in solidary management (whose highest form is self-management), in the system of ownership of the means of production (collective or individual and shared), in the forms of distribution internal and external gains, and consumption, by minimizing its negative effects.

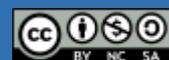
As theoretical fields, both the popular economy and the solidarity economy deny the use of labor as a commodity or mere factor of production (Tiriba, 2003). In this sense, they differ from the informal economy, which is associated, by such currents, with the exploitation of the labor force of those who do not have the means of production. However, the solidarity economy is specifically understood in Brazil, based on collective enterprises where cooperation in economic activity, the common use of the means of production and self-management predominate (Gaiger, 2009). The basic units are cooperatives, associations and informal groups where the distinction between capital and labor is minimized. As a guiding principle for the Solidarity Economy, self-management implies that the means of production are collectively owned and controlled and that decisions about the rules of operation and the directions to be followed by the solidarity enterprise are made based on the democratic participation of each individual. Thus, management, production, its means and results belong to everyone, so that solidarity and autonomy-promoting practices in organizations are necessary.

Although the term "popular solidarity economy" has been consolidated in several spaces of debate in Brazil, the distinction between the "popular economy" and the "solidarity economy" is clear in the current led by Paul Singer in this country. For Singer (2000), the basic unit of analysis of the solidarity economy is the production unit, and not the domestic unit, cell of the popular economy, for Coraggio. According to the author, the domestic unit is, by definition, a consumer unit, and not necessarily a producer of goods.

In this way, the solidarity economy is associated with productive units organized collectively and in a self-managed manner. Singer (2000, 2002) associates the solidarity economy with a non-capitalist (or post-capitalist alternative) economy characterized by socialist or cooperative principles, formed by egalitarian companies, in which the ownership is of all who work there and the profits are shared. It would be configured as a way of interstitial production, inserted in the voids left by capitalism (Singer, 2002).

Common to the terms "popular economy" and "solidarity economy" is the attention given to the socio-political dimension, both in terms of internal democracy to the units and of decision-making autonomy in relation to the public and private sectors (not subject to the control of other institutions, even if partners). Such an emphasis suggests that evaluating the performance of these ventures should not be restricted to their profitability or ability to generate income, but, on the contrary, involves gains in terms of sociability, involvement and participation in political decisions, consumption patterns and interpersonal relationships, development of an alternative work culture, etc.

As they encompass diverse forms of production, flexible with regard to the selection criteria of workers, time and place of work, among others, the popular economy and the solidarity economy appear as alternatives for the public that does not "fit" in processes of formal employment and wages, for their education, experience, family configuration, etc. It is recognized in the literature that such organizations have been posed as perennial survival strategies by the vulnerable population.



In this sense, it is worth thinking about the extent to which the popular and solidary economy, in its multiple faces, presents itself as a permanent feature of Latin American economies and in what situations it is configured as an embryo of transformation processes. Although it is often associated with a conjunctural or transitory movement, resulting from unemployment and exclusion processes, it is possible to think of it as part of a broader and more permanent popular organization process, suggesting it as a resource for alternative development processes. It is necessary to understand the real emancipatory and transforming potential contained in these practices.

## POPULAR ECONOMY, PRODUCTIVE RESTRUCTURING AND AUTONOMY

For Tiriba (2003), the popular economy manifests itself in different historical times, integrating itself with the hegemonic or subaltern modes of production or models of economic development. It is not an exclusive phenomenon of capitalist societies, being present in the societies of hunters and gatherers, slavers, socialists, etc. But it is in the context of the neoliberal model of capital accumulation that it presents itself, strongly, as the “economy of the poor”, because it is when the recurrence of it as a survival strategy is made explicit.

At the end of the twentieth century, the term popular economy was associated with workers excluded from the formal labor market and those who seek to supplement their income, because they earn low wages and have few guarantees in salaried jobs. The popular economy was, at that time, the “shelter” of the unemployed and the underemployed, who supported themselves in networks of solidarity between workers, their families and the local community (Icaza & Tiriba, 2009). It is possible to question, then, the extent to which the popular economy emerges as part of capitalism itself, functional in reducing social conflicts by dampening the shocks of crises. The movement to make labor markets more flexible provides an impetus to this economy.

In fact, the flexibilization movement and the consequent decentralization of production and work feeds a diversity of subordinate relationships, ranging from direct subcontracting to apparently autonomous activities, but which contribute to reducing labor and material costs. This set of activities, often informal and precarious, would have a role in reducing costs and weakening the union base, assuming a universal character, since it exists both in the center and on the capitalist periphery, and playing a fundamental role for the penetration of markets.

For Tiriba (1999, 2005), however, in the popular economy, old social relations of production persist, which could be the embryo of a new culture of work. These remnants of pre-capitalist formations could guide economic-social relations that, at a given historical moment, could be opposed to the capitalist mode of production. In the practices of the popular sectors it would be the genesis of more general processes of solidarity and cooperation.

If the movement of flexibility in the labor markets, on the one hand, stimulates “abstract work”, subordinated to exogenous production processes, although unrelated to the wage relationship, on the other we find “self-employed” in fact, when the worker has the right to work. control of the production process. While in the first case one can speak of precarious work, in the second, greater control over time and the work process can expand the possibilities of work by leveraging accumulated knowledge and existing networks (Lago, 2009).

As pointed out by Razeto *et al.* (1990), although participation in a popular economic organization is in most cases the only alternative in the short term to face the immediate need for survival, it is common for its participants to progressively identify with this solution, passing even preferring it to others, economically more profitable, since they learn to value self-employment, without a boss, in an environment of greater trust and solidarity, and also due to the possibilities of cultural development, training and living with others offered by organizations.

Favreau (2004), on the other hand, indicates that the units of the popular economy (self-employed workers, small family businesses), as they develop, can become both private sector companies and social economy organizations, the latter option meaning participation in a collective organization strategy for cooperation and the construction of local exchange systems. In this case, the relationship with social movements and support and promotion entities, such as NGOs, is of great importance. Tiriba (1999, 2005), in turn, emphasizes the importance of educational processes that lead to the exercise and the horizon of self-management, defending a “pedagogy of associated production”.

For Quijano (1998), the great diversity of organizations that make up the popular economy in Latin America prevents it from being directly associated with an alternative economy. What can be said, from the observation of the realities of Latin American countries, is the existence of a large set of productive units that are not fully of the entrepreneurial type, since they are not based exclusively on wage relations and neither on the market.



In many cases, therefore, reciprocity and the principle of community action are not the result of ideological decisions, or even of an ethics of inherent solidarity or adherence to a political-ideological project of society. Solidarity and reciprocity may, in reality, be the only possible resource for survival. But from there arises a set of issues relevant to contemporary debate in Latin America, such as the relationship between reciprocity and the market, the relationship between self-employment and capital, between the rationalities of capital and communities, etc. (Quijano, 1998).

## SOCIAL AND SOLIDARY ECONOMY AND PLURAL ECONOMY

In recent years, the discussion of the popular and solidarity economy in Latin America has come more intensely to the “social and solidarity economy”, as summarized by Jose Luis Coraggio in his recent works (Coraggio, 2011, 2012c, 2013a, 2013b). While the popular economy originated in the discussion of the urban problem, the social economy is placed in a broader debate to understand the economy and to read the realities of the countries where it developed most, notably France and Canada, in addition to other European countries.

As a theoretical field, social economy is placed as a sub-discipline under construction, bringing together elements of economic anthropology, economic sociology, history and political economy. In this approach, the “economic” is understood as a multidisciplinary project, where the integration principles discussed by Karl Polanyi become central to understanding the realities. The currents that embraced the term criticized the fact that economic science does not integrate the social dimension. Thus, the social economy denies hegemonic economism in the current economic literature, proposing a different approach from both the neoclassical economy and the Marxist political economy.

At the heart of the social economy is criticism of the subordination of society to the market principle, or the supposed “uprooting” that anchors the market society, as Polanyi (2011) thought. In this sense, the economy is “rooted” in the social, cultural and political structure, which is why it cannot be understood outside its historical context and the social system seen as a whole. Such reading understands economics as part of culture in its broadest sense, and human behavior as going beyond self-interest; this would be explained by non-universal combinations of selfish interest, obligation, calculation, spontaneity, solidarity and other factors not intrinsic, but culturally defined (Coraggio, 2009a). In addition, there are no natural economies; all economies are socio-political constructions.

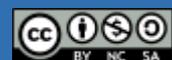
Thus, the use of the term goes back to the affirmation of an economy imbricated with the social, to the refusal of economicism and the autonomy of the economic in the face of society, as well as carrying a strong political connotation, by expressing a way of transforming capitalism towards social relations of production of another order (Lisboa, 2004)

In a similar vein, Laville (2009a) speaks of a plural economy, an analytical perception that is strongly anchored in Polanyi’s critique of the fundamentals of modern economy, such as the identification between economy and market, the autonomy conferred to the economic sphere in relation to the others, to identification of the market to a self-regulated instance and identification of the company with the capitalist company. The plural economy, on the contrary, will pay attention to the presence of other principles of economic behavior in societies, in addition to the Market.

In “The Great Transformation”, Polanyi (2011) uses the ethnographic research of Malinowski and Thurnwald to discuss the different modes of economic behavior on the market that permeated societies. The market principle is what allows supply and demand for goods and services to meet through price fixing. In capitalism, this principle tends to overlap with others, which is revealed in the tendency to “market” work and nature towards a “market society”.

Redistribution is the principle according to which production is handed over to a central authority that has the responsibility to distribute it, which implies a procedure for defining allocation rules. It relates to a common leadership and to the institutional standard of centrality, a conduit for the collection, storage and redistribution of goods and services.

The third principle, reciprocity, corresponds to the relationship between groups and people around benefits that are defined by ties between the parties. It is associated with the sexual organization of society, that is, family and kinship, and with the institutional pattern of symmetry, which guarantees the taking and giving of goods and services. He is opposed to mercantile exchange insofar as it is inseparable from human relations, linked to the desires for recognition and power. It is also distinguished from redistributive exchange, as it is not imposed by a central power. A particular form of reciprocity is that exercised based on the family unit, called by Polanyi



“domestic administration”, or “domesticity”. Domesticity, considered a fourth principle, is related to production for own consumption and associated with the institutional pattern of autarchy, a model of domestic administration, home economics (oikos) or production for own consumption.

Another theoretical reading that supports the social economy is the idea of gift, worked on by Mauss (2003), which deals with the network of bonds and obligations present in societies, and which involves the circulation of goods (both material and symbolic) around triple obligation: give, receive and return. Mauss develops his thesis on donation based on ethnographic references from institutions such as the Potlach of the Kwkiutl Indians (British Columbia) and the Kula of the Trobriand Islands (New Guinea). The concept of gift is used as a counterpoint to utilitarianism, in a perspective that assumes that the initial motivation of the action or decision is not personal interest, but the obligation to give, solidarity and reciprocity.

The debate on the social economy is wide and inconclusive, and its empirical origin is found in different sources, such as the mechanisms of mutual help of ancient societies (Greek, Roman, Egyptian) and the associationist socialism that permeated the 19th century European worker’s movement, strongly sensitized, at the time, with the high human cost of the industrial revolution. According to Defourny (2009), in the present century the social economy is described in two main ways.

The first part of the identification of the institutional or legal forms of most social economy initiatives, namely, cooperative or cooperative companies, borrowing or mutual aid companies, associative organizations or associations, and foundations, institutions private companies not only focused on profit. The second strand seeks to highlight the features common to the units it groups, which can be summarized in four: a) the main purpose is the provision of services to members or the community, while profit fulfills a secondary role; b) they are marked by management autonomy, which differentiates them from the provision of services by the public sector; c) the members exercise their democratic control, and participation in the management is independent of the capital held by each of the members; d) people and the corporate purpose take precedence over capital in the distribution of surpluses.

In Europe, where the social economy is discussed more widely, these activities are linked to the specifics of the social model in force there. In this sense, the older, more heavily institutionalized social economy organizations are generally opposed, and the emerging “new social economy” or “solidarity economy”, the latter being largely responsible for social innovations and democratic effervescences (Defourny, 2009). This new “generation of the social economy” addresses issues of current relevance, such as proximity services, the rehabilitation of poor neighborhoods, assistance to the elderly or those in difficulty, fair trade, ethical and solidary finances, sustainable agriculture, environmental waste management and the professional insertion of the low qualified (Defourny, 2009). Laville (2012, p. 41) calls this new set of activities “social and solidarity economy”.

The European project of a social and solidarity economy is then composed of a heterogeneous movement of experiences that have as common point the search for the recomposition of the relations between economy and society, translating a concern in face of the tendency of commercialization of society, promoted by the hegemony of thought neoliberal economic policy. These initiatives gain strength in the context of a crisis in the mechanisms of regulation of society, especially the welfare states, on the one hand, and labor markets based on wage relations, on the other (França Filho, 2001).

The Latin American understanding of the social and solidarity economy, on the other hand, differs from the European concept. While in Europe such forms were strongly driven by the labor movement in the early 19th century, in Latin America the solidarity economy does not have its origin in the union movement, but in different sectors of society, with relevance for the poorest and not integrated to wage labor, supported by churches and other entities, and drawing on local cultural roots. Nor do the experiences of the social economy arise from the exhaustion of the welfare state, as it has always played a minor role in Latin America, just as the traditional economic forms founded on reciprocity have not been drained here, as in Europe (Lisboa, 2004).

For França Filho (2001), the Brazilian singularity of the solidarity economy resides in the still strong legacy of a popular economy, that is, a set of forms of production and economic distribution in which economic activities are not disconnected from social relations in its most strict. This set of activities permeates the state and market circuits, in a process that reflects the incompleteness of our modernity. The networks of solidarity that exist in people’s daily lives are an important substrate for broader processes linked to the social and solidarity economy. In this sense, interest in forms of economic solidarity (both old and new) unites peripheral and central countries, involving

diverse initiatives around other mechanisms of economic-political regulation that do not pass only through the market or the State.

The popular urban economy and the social and solidarity economy would be an integral part of the existing economic system in Latin America, the latter being part of a transition process towards the desired economic system, centered on work and reciprocity values. Coraggio's sense of the social economy is both that of the "overlapping" of the economy in the social and that of shared responsibility for the quality of human life.

In Coraggio's (2009a) view, Latin American economies are not pure market economies, nor are their societies complete market societies. Nor is the market there the only institution that mediates the relationship between such societies and the natural base. They would be mixed economies, formed by three sectors or subsystems: i) the business capital economy, a heterogeneous sector, oriented towards the private reproduction/accumulation of capital; ii) the popular economy, oriented towards the reproduction of the life of domestic units, highly heterogeneous and fragmented, including from subsistence activity to segments highly linked to the business economy; and iii) the public economy, oriented towards a combination of systemic needs, often in contradiction: the common good, combined with capital-dependent governance, the accumulation of particular power and the strategic legitimation of the system. This reading of a mixed economy formed by three subsystems or sectors seeks to oppose the traditional scheme of two subsystems (state-market or public-private). The criterion of internal rationality is placed above the others (such as the size of the enterprise or the ownership of the means of production) to understand the intra and intersectoral relationships through which society "resolves" the economic issue (Muñoz, 2013). The popular economy is a heterogeneous set of units that has always played an important role in the reproduction of a large part of the workers there, articulating in different ways to the other two economic spheres.

Since these are mixed economies under capitalist hegemony, Latin American economies are based on civilizing values that legitimize the unlimited accumulation of capital and the commodification of human relations (Coraggio, 2009a). Although the internal organization of domestic units is guided by reciprocity, solidarity is not the predominant behavior in their external relations.

The construction of an economic system in which solidarity and reciprocity persist or prevail, then, asserts itself as political action (Coraggio, 2012b). The construction of this project requires the recognition, conceptual and empirical, of a characteristic heterogeneity: "a heterogeneity that] far from being a hindrance, from the perspective of modernity, is a resource, both because of the possibility of solving a sustenance that the free market does not it succeeds, as it is the field of constitution of social actors that can take on this project of reinstitutionalization of economic processes" (Coraggio, 2009a, p. 16).

In this sense, Coraggio (2012c) proposes a current reading of Polanyi (2011, 2012) that guides the construction of a political project in the direction of an economy with a market distinct from a market economy. In this sense, he differentiates the "really existing popular economy" from the "labor economy", the utopian ideal of an economic system in which the logic of "expanded reproduction of life" predominates at the expense of the logic of capital accumulation. The "social and solidarity economy" or "solidarity economy" would be the set of solidarity practices existing in the three spheres (popular economy, capitalist business economy and public sector economy) and which are possible embryos of the transition from the "capital economy" to the "Labor economy" (Coraggio, 2009a).

To the reading of the mixed economy is added a project of an ideal economic system, centered on work and expanded reproduction of life. The economy of labor can only be thought of as a counterpoint to the economy of capital, and to the meaning conferred on labor by the latter. The main feature of the economy of capital is the tendency to market labor, which is considered a fictitious commodity, as stated by Polanyi. In the capital economy, decisions are made from the market, the dominant economic principle, where individuals are thought of as utilitarian and calculating and follow the logic of competition and capital accumulation. Labor economics, on the other hand, conceives the economy as a system that combines five principles of social integration: a) autarchy of the domestic unit, which produces individually or collectively for consumption or use; b) intra and intercommunity reciprocity, based on mutual aid; c) progressive redistribution, with a focus on both individuals and communities; d) exchange (exchange) in regulated markets in order to avoid abuses linked to monopolies, labor exploitation and damage to small production caused by competition; e) participatory planning, based on the recognition of the organizations and networks of the social and solidarity economy and the coordination of the economic actions of the multiple agents (Coraggio, 2007).

The labor economy is not guided by the quantitative growth of a mass of goods, but by the realization of people's potential and the quality of life and relationships. It would be organized based on the disalienation of work. The social issue, in the labor economy, does not lie in the search for full employment, so that everyone can obtain income and the consumption patterns dictated by capital. It implies discovering, recognizing, recovering, enhancing, inventing and developing other forms of motivation and coordination of human activities, defined by the workers themselves and in order to fully enjoy everyday life (Coraggio, 2009b).

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The social economy is treated by Coraggio (2009b) as a transition from the mixed economy to the labor economy: "the popular economy represents the socioeconomic starting point of social economy practices oriented towards the institutionalization of a labor economy" (p. 125).

For Coraggio (2012b), it cannot be expected that the social and solidarity economy in Latin America, similarly to what happens in Europe, is limited to occupying niches not reached by the market or by the State, such as those of proximity services, that is, conducted by a group of individuals with high "social capital" who are capable of organizing proximity service schemes or autonomous and self-managing communities. The massive lack of basic needs, the degree of unequal access to technical and scientific training and the stigmatization of the poor by the middle and upper classes make it difficult to develop symmetrical solidary relationships that span the entire social spectrum. Despite the advance in the institutionalization of these forms, in recent years<sup>15</sup>, the popular economy is mostly composed of workers in precarious situations, without access to labor rights, often in conditions of subsistence.

In this sense, the author points out three currents of thought and action within the field of social and solidarity economy. The first is that which seeks the reintegration of excluded workers into the labor market, working at the microeconomic level and focusing on poverty alleviation. Such current is based on the logic of the market when defining the ends and means of the undertakings; instrumental rationality and the capital company paradigm prevail, explicit, for example, in the separation between the domestic/family economy and the micro enterprise. According to this current, Coraggio (2013a) calls it "integrationist", as he understands that the role of new (or old, renewed) economic forms is to fill the void left by global capitalism, guaranteeing sustainability through the competition of these companies with each other and with capitalist firms. Such a view guides the action of multilateral organizations, notably the World Bank, and is in line with the more conservative conception of the informal sector, discussed earlier.

The second and third currents are guided by the logic of reciprocity and have a systemic orientation, unlike the first, which focuses on individual ventures. They differ from each other in understanding the role of the social and solidarity economy in the context of the economy as a whole. The second current assumes the need to consider this economy as a subsystem of the mixed economy, recognizing and strengthening its networks and interfaces with the two other subsystems. Emphasizes the need for networks, not only economic, but also for reciprocity and solidarity, since the objective is to overcome the fragmentation of enterprises and promote an organic and articulated sector.

The third current considers the need to overcome the capitalist economic and cultural system, proposing the construction of the "other economy". It tries to redefine economic relations at a systemic level, proposing a form superior to capital's own practices, replacing the relations of competition between particular interests with relations of redistribution, solidarity and reciprocity and the predominance of the legitimately established common good. This current starts from a deep criticism of the capitalist system, questioning the importance of the other economic principles, and proposing new conceptions of State, market, forms of property, degree of commodification of labor and nature, etc.

Coraggio (2013a) assumes the need for recognition of the three currents, assuming as part of the political task the construction of alliances, in a joint movement. Each of the currents emphasizes a relevant aspect of the SSE, being such complementary aspects, reflecting the diversity of concepts and debates around the theme. In fact, these are different levels of intervention that interdepend on their real concreteness.

Such construction, however, passes through another conception of economic development that understands the heterogeneity of economic principles and relations of production as a resource to be leveraged in a work-oriented economy. It is about expanding the conceptions of economics, technology, political action and development.

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### ABSTRACT:

The research suggests how the full potential of the enterprises and organizations of the Social and Solidarity Economy in promoting sustainable development may be better understood by representing cultural, social, economic, and environmental issues within an integrated analytical framework. On these premises, an extended version of Coraggio's scheme (2015) is obtained by adding a fourth sector of economic activity, namely the global economy, as opposed to the popular economy. Looking at Coraggio's integrated scheme, an additional institutional space related to the social and solidarity economy emerges, representing the field of digital solidarity and cooperation. Then, the research helps to clarify what a local context is and how it relates to the notion of place. Finally, the notion of place is contrasted with the notion of system, as the attractiveness of the former depends on its distinctive features, while the latter emphasizes the instrumental value of its elements.

### RESUMEN:

La investigación sugiere cómo el pleno potencial de las empresas y organizaciones de la Economía Social y Solidaria para promover el desarrollo sostenible puede entenderse mejor al representar los problemas culturales, sociales, económicas y ambientales dentro de un marco analítico integrado. Sobre estas premisas, se obtiene una versión extendida del esquema de Coraggio (2015) agregando un cuarto sector de actividad económica, a saber, la economía global, en contraposición a la economía popular. Al observar el esquema integrado de Coraggio, surge un espacio institucional adicional relacionado con la economía social y solidaria, que representa el campo de la solidaridad y la cooperación digitales. Luego, la investigación ayuda a aclarar qué es un contexto local y cómo se relaciona con la noción de lugar. Finalmente, la noción de lugar se contrasta con la noción de sistema, ya que el atractivo del primero depende de sus rasgos distintivos, mientras que el segundo enfatiza el valor instrumental de sus elementos.

### RÉSUMÉ:

La recherche suggère comment le plein potentiel des entreprises et organisations de l'Économie Sociale et Solidaire pour promouvoir le développement durable peut être mieux compris en représentant les problèmes culturels, sociaux, économiques et environnementaux dans un cadre analytique intégré. Sur ces prémisses, on obtient une version étendue du schéma de Coraggio (2015) en ajoutant un quatrième secteur d'activité économique, à savoir l'économie globale, par opposition à l'économie populaire. En observant le schéma intégré de Coraggio, apparaît un espace institutionnel supplémentaire lié à l'économie sociale et solidaire, qui représente le champ de la solidarité et de la coopération numériques. Ensuite, la recherche aide à clarifier ce qu'est un contexte local et comment il se rapporte à la notion de lieu. Enfin, la notion de lieu contraste avec la notion de système, puisque l'attrait du premier dépend de ses traits distinctifs, tandis que le second met l'accent sur la valeur instrumentale de ses éléments.

### RESUMO:

A investigação sugere como todo o potencial das empresas e organizações da Economia Social e Solidária para promover o desenvolvimento sustentável pode ser melhor compreendido através da representação de questões culturais, sociais, econômicas e ambientais dentro de um quadro analítico integrado. Sobre essas premissas, uma versão estendida do esquema de Coraggio (2015) é obtida adicionando um quarto setor de atividade econômica, a saber, a economia global, em oposição à economia popular. Ao observar o esquema integrado de Coraggio, surge um espaço institucional adicional relacionado com a economia social e solidária, representando o campo da solidariedade e cooperação digital. Também, a investigação ajuda a esclarecer o que é um contexto local e como ele se relaciona com a noção de lugar. Finalmente, a noção de lugar é contrastada com a noção de sistema, uma vez que o atraente do primeiro depende de seus traços distintivos, enquanto a segunda enfatiza o valor instrumental de seus elementos.

### KEYWORDS:

SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY  
ECONOMY ENTERPRISES  
AND ORGANIZATIONS,  
CULTURALLY SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT, DIGITAL  
SOLIDARITY.

### PALABRAS CLAVE:

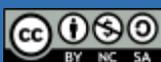
EMPRESAS Y  
ORGANIZACIONES DE  
ECONOMÍA SOCIAL Y  
SOLIDARIA, DESARROLLO  
CULTURALMENTE  
SOSTENIBLE, SOLIDARIDAD

### MOTS-CLÉS:

ENTREPRISES ET  
ORGANISATIONS  
D'ÉCONOMIE  
SOCIALE ET SOLIDAIRE,  
DÉVELOPPEMENT  
CULTURELLEMENT  
DURABLE, SOLIDARITÉ  
NUMÉRIQUE.

### PALAVRAS CHAVE:

EMPRESAS E  
ORGANIZAÇÕES  
DE ECONOMIA  
SOCIAL E SOLIDÁRIA,  
DESENVOLVIMENTO  
CULTURALMENTE  
SUSTENTÁVEL,  
SOLIDARIEDADE DIGITAL.



## INTRODUCTION

This research aims at developing and further articulating the role of the enterprises and organizations of the Social Solidarity Economy (SSEOs) in implementing the 2030 Agenda and contributing to the post-COVID-19 recovery, by adding new institutional fields of analysis (i.e., a focus on the cultural dimension of sustainable development, the introduction of the global economy in Coraggio's scheme of interinstitutional relations, and the identification of evaluation mismatches related to the adoption of different analytical perspectives), and further analysing the motivational issues for participating in social and solidarity practices.

Almost twenty-five years ago, Nyssens wrote that “[m]odes of regulation still remain locked into the market-nonmarket dilemma, and this seems to indicate a certain ‘blindness’ to the plurality of modes of organization which are intermeshed in socio-economic life” (Nyssens, 1997, p. 172). Nowadays, while recognizing an increasing institutional diversity, and numerous episodes of crossfertilization among different institutional frameworks, it is worth noting how a wide share of the debate is still focused on the state-market relations, even when the organizations and institutions pertaining to both domains are not (the only) key players in providing effective responses to the issues at stake. A case is that of the effectiveness of the balanced budget rule, another is that one concerning the enforcement of human rights, and, finally, state-market relations are at the forefront of the debate on the environmental sustainability of the socioeconomic system. Of course, in all those cases state and market institutions play a crucial role in a shared (and multidimensional) development process, but other players have comparable, if not more relevant, roles in determining the outcome of the policies adopted and of the processes implemented. In fact, there is a vast set of social and cultural institutions operating formally and informally, as well as a restricted number of public bureaus and self-interested innovators that, due to the systemic relevance of the services they provide, have achieved a geopolitical power going beyond a substantial responsiveness to the civil society and to the public opinion. Consequently, as suggested by Nyssen (1997), this research aims at overcoming a “binary picture” considering only market and public institutions, as the current “social mosaic” is more complex. Specifically, a wider perspective is needed to encompass the human and institutional variety that nowadays characterizes social relations, both in everyday life and within cultural, political, economic, and technological organizations.

While being often overlooked due to their limited impact on the financial dimension and on the aggregate outcome of macroeconomic policies, the renewed interest for the wide set of social and solidarity economy enterprises and organizations (SSEOs) must be put into a relation with the consolidation of the global economy and with the systemic crises that hit the global society in the last fifty years. Then, it becomes manifest how, while having a scarce influence at the macro scale, SSEOs play a major role in local contexts providing support to marginalized social groups and triggering development in peripheral territories, where neither the market nor the state can satisfy the local demand (Salustri & Viganò, 2018). Beside their instrumental value, SSEOs play a fundamental role in reviving political debates on the enforcement of the human rights of those kept behind and in advocating democratic and self-managed organizational processes both at political and economic level. Furthermore, SSEOs may contribute to the identification of those idiosyncratic issues that characterize the localities, reviving the intangible heritage of places and contributing to the accumulation of new cultural capital by alimending a process of culturally sustainable development. Finally, toward a mix of democratic experimentation and grassroots innovation, SSEOs may provide a not-negligible contribution to the environmental sustainability, fostering ecoefficient commoning practices and promoting a cultural change towards more sustainable consumption and production practices.

Lying on these premises, in Section 2 the main traits of the Social and Solidarity Economy are briefly summarized by drawing on RPIESS Global Vision. Then, Section 3 provides a more operational definition of the SSE, and briefly illustrates how UN agencies and other international institutions perceive the SSE. Section 4 and Section 5 analyze, respectively, the issues related to the legal recognition of the SSE and SSEOs' role within a market economy. Moreover, Section 6 illustrates a four-dimensional analytical framework that may be used to represent the sustainable development paradigm and to identify SSEOs' role in the process of the implementation of the SDGs. Finally, Section 7 proposes some reflections concerning the implementation of the SDGs in the localities.

## WHAT IS THE SOCIAL SOLIDARITY ECONOMY?

Since the first Global Forum in 1997, the SSE is represented worldwide by a unique organization, that is, the Intercontinental network for the promotion of social solidarity economy (RIPESS). RIPESS has a macroregional articulation, in which continental “member networks [...] bring together national and sectorial networks, thus ensuring strong territorial anchoring”.<sup>1</sup> RIPESS promotes a systemic transformative change based on SSE’s action in all those localities where the existing system fails in satisfying people and planet’s needs, and on a more general commitment toward the globalization of solidarity. According to RIPESS Global Vision, the Social Solidarity Economy is “a pathway to transformative and systemic change” (RIPESS, 2015, p. 2). Specifically, the SSE “is an alternative to capitalism and other authoritarian, state-dominated economic systems. In SSE ordinary people play an active role in shaping all of the dimensions of human life: economic, social, cultural, political, and environmental. [...]. It also aims to transform the social and economic system that includes public, private and third sectors [...]. SSE is not only about the poor, but strives to overcome inequalities, which includes all classes of society. SSE has the ability to take the best practices that exist in our present system (such as efficiency, use of technology and knowledge) and transform them to serve the welfare of the community based on different values and goals” (RIPESS, 2015, p. 2).

RIPESS definition of the SSE emphasizes its ethical and value-based nature,<sup>2</sup> as well as its political nature. Also, it emphasizes the multidimensional and multistakeholder approach to a transformative change based on poverty eradication and contrasting inequalities, pluralism, and welfare-enhancing grassroots innovation. Specifically, the SSE advocates a transformative action that “goes beyond superficial change in which the root oppressive structures and fundamental issues remain intact” (RIPESS, 2015, p. 2), by actively recreating aspirations and by learning how to prevent the numerous forms of discrimination and oppression.

RIPESS Global Vision emphasizes the value and the plurality of forms of self-management and collective ownership (sometimes redefined as collegial management), especially of workers ownership and workplace democracy, independently from their legal recognition. Furthermore, it recognizes the value of monetized and non-monetized work and exchanges as a source of “valuable output” and workers’ “satisfaction, happiness, and social recognition” (RIPESS, 2015, p. 6). Then, it connects the SSE to social movements fighting for social and economic justice and to environmental movements, prospecting bilateral and multilateral alliances (but not a unique platform), and fostering an influence through advocacy on political parties and national governments (RIPESS, 2015, pp. 6-7). Finally, RIPESS’ Global Vision fosters alliances with the popular and informal economy, with organic, green, and fair-trade organizations, and with consumers organizations anchoring social practices (RIPESS, 2015, p. 8).

## HOW UN AGENCIES PERCEIVE THE SOCIAL SOLIDARITY ECONOMY

Two years before the signature of the 2030 Agenda, the United Nations (UN) created a task force “to rethink development in the wake of multiple global crises” and to compensate the insufficient attention paid to the SSE in the post2015 development agenda.<sup>3</sup> The UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy (UNTFSSSE) is participated by numerous UN and international organizations as members and by several other organizations as observers. In few years, the amount of information publicly available on the SSE and its enterprises and organizations has grown exponentially, and consequently it is now possible to draw a complete picture of a sector of activity that so far was rather overlooked.

According to the UNTFSSSE, the “Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) encompasses organizations and enterprises that: 1) have explicit economic and social (and often environmental) objectives; 2) involve varying degrees and forms of cooperative, associative and solidarity relations among workers, producers and consumers; 3) practice workplace democracy and selfmanagement”.<sup>4</sup> Also, the UNTFSSSE underlines the variety of institutions taking part to the SSE, including, among others, “traditional forms of cooperatives and mutual associations, as well as women’s

1 About RIPESS - RIPESS

2 The values expressed in the RIPESS Charter are the following: humanism, democracy, solidarity, inclusiveness, subsidiarity, diversity, creativity, sustainable development, equality, equity and justice for all, integration of countries and people, plural and solidarity-based economic development (RIPESSM, 2015, pp. 4-5).

3 <https://unsse.org/about/>

4 <https://unsse.org/sse-and-the-sdgs/>

self-help groups, community forestry groups, social provisioning organizations or 'proximity services', fair trade organizations, associations of informal sector workers, social enterprises, and community currency and alternative finance schemes".<sup>5</sup>

According to a recent report by UNIDO (2017), the SSE "is an umbrella concept bringing together two different perspectives, namely social economy and solidarity economy (p. 11). The "social economy" focuses on "social and environmental concerns" and is "perceived as being complementary to the private sector that seeks profit maximization at the expense of society and the environment" (UNIDO, 2017). In contrast, the solidarity economy "seeks to transform the whole social and economic system, giving primacy to the welfare of people and preserving the environment over primacy to profit maximization and economic growth" (UNIDO, 2017).<sup>6</sup>

According to a recent report by ILO, SSEEEOs "respond to current global challenges, thereby contributing to a more inclusive world of work based on social justice, meaningfulness and sustainability" (Fontaneau & Pollet, 2020, p. 15). Specifically, SSEEEOs provide a critical contribution in: i) (re)embedding economic activities in local social systems, ii) organizing economic actors and facilitating transition to a more formalized social status; iii) experimenting participatory governance and promoting a renewed social dialogue; iv) searching for sustainable economic performances while focusing on social purposes; v) finding meaningfulness in work; vi) foreshadowing the network society; vii) partnering with public institutions in the design and implementation of sound public (especially welfare) policies; viii) financing social policies through innovative financial instruments (Fontaneau & Pollet, 2020).

According to the UNDP, SSEEEOs may contribute to the implementation of the SDGs in local contexts by "acting as catalysts of a transition to more sustainable and resilient societies". Specifically, SSEEEOs can contribute to "leveraging the economic potential of territories whilst promoting socio-economic cohesion and resilience through more balanced, sustainable and inclusive development models and outcomes".<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, "enabling policy and institutional frameworks, and integrated local and multi-level governance and planning systems can serve as multipliers of the impact, sustainability and scale of SSE practices" (ibidem). In this perspective, the SSE may be conceived as "an alternative productive model that can raise the capacity of territories to compete within regional and global value chains" (ibidem). Also, UNEP has identified "links between SSE and local economic development, public policy and law, environmental protection, food security/agricultural development and sustainable cities", and is striving to achieve "inclusiveness and poverty alleviation through green economy".<sup>8</sup>

Of course, the most relevant contribution to the analysis of the SSE is provided by UNRISD, that launched its first inquiry on the SSE still in 2012, followed by a conference on potential and limits of the SSE in 2013, that led to the creation of the UNTFSSE.<sup>9</sup> Beside the involvement in the implementation of the UNTFSSE's SSE Knowledge Hub for the SDGs, UNRISD launched two major projects concerning the promotion of SSEEEOs through local public policies, and the measurement of the contribution of the SSE to the implementation of the SDGs. Furthermore, UNRISD was recently involved in three projects concerning the relations among the SSE, urban communities, and vulnerable groups, the feminist analysis of SSE practices in Latin America and India, and the contribution of the SSE to the implementation of the SDGs. Finally, after 2013 UNRISD hosted three major conferences on the SSE, concerning social and solidarity finance, SSE's role in implementing the SDGs, and the promotion of the SSE through (local) public policies.

5 A similar definition is the following: "[t]he SSE encompasses a vast coalition of enterprises and organizations: associations, cooperatives, social enterprises, microfinance organizations, mutual benefit societies, NGOs, "which produce goods, services and knowledge while pursuing both economic and social aims and fostering solidarity" (UNTFSSE, 2014).

6 Beside the social and the solidarity economy, UNIDO also recognizes the rise of a "fourth sector", consisting of forbenefit organizations sharing two characteristics: advance social benefit and generate a substantial portion of income from business activities (UNIDO, 2017, p. 13).

7 <https://unsse.org/about/members/undp/>

8 <https://unsse.org/about/members/unep/>

9 <https://unsse.org/about/members/unrisd/>

## THE LEGAL RECOGNITION OF THE SSE

As stated in a recent paper by UNRISD, “[t]he institutionalization of participation in decision-making processes is a powerful tool to support the development of SSE” (Jenkins *et al.*, 2021, p. 2), and “[a]n effective course of action to meet these diverse aims is the co-construction of public policies for SSE by multiple stakeholders including government and SSE actors” (p. 5). Specifically, the co-construction of public policies can be framed within formal institutional set-ups, and/or informal arrangements between government and actors associated with SSE (Jenkins *et al.*, 2021, p. 8).

Furthermore, “adequate legal frameworks play a fundamental role in strengthening SSE ecosystems across all levels of governance [...]” (Jenkins *et al.*, 2021, p. 11). Particularly, “[e]nabling laws and policies at various territorial levels (supranational, national, and sub-national) can significantly enhance the recognition, consolidation and expansion of SSE” (Jenkins *et al.*, 2021). In fact, legal recognition for SSEOs can take on diverse forms, and in the last decade there has been a multiplication of governmental and urban initiatives that support and promote social and solidarity economy at territorial level.<sup>10</sup> The adoption of SSE legal frameworks is often the outcome of “a ‘bottom-up’ process in which growth of the SSE sector at the grassroot level precedes the adoption of SSE-specific laws” (Jenkins *et al.*, 2021, p. 12). [...] Consequently, “[d]epending on political and institutional context, laws on SSE can be adopted at the subnational level, sometimes as precursors to national level legislative action” (Jenkins *et al.*, 2021). Laws on SSE “can be classified into laws or legal frameworks on

SSE as a whole and laws or legal frameworks on specific types of [...] [SSEOs]” (p. 12). Concerning the latter, two approaches to defining SSEOs can be identified in laws: the legal institutional approach and the normative approach, and most laws adopt both. Based on these approaches, a wide range of SSEOs is legally recognized and defined, including: cooperatives, non-profit organizations, mutuals, foundations, and social enterprises (ibidem, p. 14).

While the absence of SSEOs’ legal recognition, or the design of an inadequate legal framework, may have a negative impact on the evolution of contemporary welfare state toward a “solidaritycentered welfare state”, SSEOs’ recognition within national, regional, and local legal frameworks may enable the implementation of the principle of solidarity, at social, political, economic level, but also at technological level. At social level, SSEOs play a fundamental role in anchoring commoning practices, providing people with an enabling environment for participating in local initiatives inspired to principles of redistribution, solidarity, and mutualism. At political level, it is worth noting how SSEOs adopt and disseminate forms of democratic governance and selfmanagement models of organization. Furthermore, in their interaction with the public sector, they may advocate the full implementation of the state of law, in a global scenario that since Seventies induced, instead, a retrenchment of the welfare state, followed, since the beginning of the New Millennium, by increasing difficulties in enforcing human and social rights. During the same years, legal studies made further improvements in the design of more comprehensive theory of social rights, that nowadays include four generations of rights:<sup>11</sup> civil and political rights (first generation), economic, social, and cultural rights (second generation), rights to peace, development, safe and healthy environment, and use of natural resources (third generation), and future generations rights (fourth generation) (Pocar, 2018). As the third and fourth generation of rights exert an influence over the life of all human beings, their implementation requires a common action and a common responsibility. Consequently, only by means of a “synergic solidarity” based on mutualism and altruism, common needs and aspirations concerning peace, quality of life, “unpolluted liberties”, and digital freedoms will be satisfied (Pérez-Luño, 2016).

## THE ECONOMIC ROLE OF SSEOS

At operational level, the retrenchment of welfare state calls for an expansion of SSEOs’ economic role, particularly in the current scenario of crisis. In fact, while people and institutions are still coping with the most harmful consequences of the covid crisis, there is a not-negligible risk that the fragmentation of social relations and the asymmetric impacts of the related socioeconomic shocks will radicalize the individual propensity to elaborating exit strategies in response to societal challenges. Instead, by anchoring mutualistic and solidaristic initiatives, SSEOs

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.ripess.org/working-areas/public-policies-and-legislation/?lang=en>

<sup>11</sup> In opposition to the classification of human rights in “generations” Pocar (2018) notices how “human rights are inherent in human being and do not depend on their recognition under the law, which is only relevant for their protection, as it clearly derives from the 1948 Universal Declaration” (p. 1).



incentivize individuals to participating on voluntary basis in commoning and cooperative practices, and to operate some redistribution informally (Salustri, 2021).

Mainstream economics still hesitates (and sometimes fails) to recognize, beside its political value, the instrumental value of voice (here intended as participation in activities anchored by SSEEOs) in elaborating a way out of global crises. However, recalling Hirschman's discourse, voice "should complement and occasionally supersede exit as a recuperation mechanism when business firms, public services, and other organizations deteriorate" (Hirschman, 1970, p. 431). Consequently, during crises, rather than investing in the most competitive territories and social groups to benefit of efficiency gains, it may result more convenient to narrow the social and territorial imbalances and to eradicate epistemic injustices to put the economy on a sustainable pattern of development.

Indeed, the COVID-19 crisis "is, above all, a human crisis that calls for solidarity",<sup>12</sup> as it "has increased the level of uncertainty at the economic and work level", and "this situation does not affect everyone the same way" (UNTFSSSE, 2020, p. 3). In fact, inequalities within and across countries are deepening and differentiating their impact because of the crisis, fueling a need of resilient transformation (this is the novelty with respect to the previous crisis of 2008) toward a sustainable common future. But this, in turn, calls for a collective reflection on the root causes of the epistemic injustices that are keeping large strata of population behind.

Within this scenario, SSEEOs may play a crucial role, but to unleash their full potential, they need the support of public institutions. Specifically, the co-construction and co-implementation of supportive policies in favour of SSEEOs must contribute to levelling the playing field with forprofit organizations according to a principle of equal treatment. In turn, the existence of supportive regulations and fiscal exemptions for SSEEOs may foster the consolidation and further development of the SSE, and the latter may act as a driver of resilient transformation toward sustainable development, enhancing workers' productivity, creating new jobs, and opening new opportunities for social businesses.

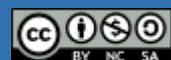
On the other hand, it is worth noting how SSEEOs are made of people, and large strata of population are facing dramatic losses along all the dimensions of human development (health, education, decent income) and among their affections. Consequently, an improved access to healthcare, education, and a more pervasive income redistribution may be key factors in stimulating empowerment and participation in social and solidarity initiatives of those who are more exposed to the harshest consequences of the crisis.

Furthermore, at technological level, SSEEOs may facilitate a shift from the ongoing process of commodification towards a process of commonification of patents and, more in general, of innovation (Broumas, 2017), fostering an inclusive knowledge economy sustained by effective processes of dissemination of innovative products and services satisfying emerging people's needs. More in general, SSEEOs may counterbalance the economies of agglomeration and proximity that nowadays characterize central places, that are, those poles leading a process of technological progress. Agglomeration and proximity, if by one side are of fundamental importance in fostering competitiveness and catching-up processes both at technological and economic level, on the other hand are often associated with the marginalization and the exclusion of large population strata. A development paradigm driven by two engines of development, one endogenous based on innovation and competitive markets, one exogenous based on solidarity and social capital, may combine the benefits of technological progress with a fair distribution of economic and social benefits across the whole population.

## SSEEOs IN A FOUR-DIMENSIONAL FRAMEWORK OF GLOBALLY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Beside their human and social purposes, in the localities SSEEOs may play a crucial role both in expanding the access to services of collective interest and in triggering bottom-up processes of development (UNTFSSSE, 2014). Specifically, their action encompasses the three dimensions of sustainable development (the social, the economic, and the environmental dimension), but the element of novelty identified and further clarified in this paper is the recognition of a fourth dimension of sustainability, that is, the cultural dimension. Specifically, a four-dimensional framework of analysis may provide an integrated view of human and sustainable patterns of development, making, on the one hand, human development more interconnected with other issues in development studies, and, on the other hand, sustainable development less utopistic.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/above-all-human-crisis-calls-solidarity>



As stated in the Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987), “sustainable development [...] meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (p. 3). But here it is worth noting how “[t]he concept of needs goes beyond simply material needs and includes values, relationships, freedom to think, act, and participate, all amounting to sustainable living, morally, and spiritually” (Shah, 2008, p. 2). Then, the three-dimensional framework involving the social, the economic, and the environmental dimension, and their intersections may reveal inadequate to represent the complexity of the sustainable development paradigm. According to UNESCO,<sup>13</sup> in fact, sustainable development involves an additional dimension (namely culture), that is associated to improvements of people’s quality of life, and that, if considered as transversal to the other three dimensions, may be at risk of being overlooked. Clearly, quality of life and human development are both people centred paradigms, even if they have been conceptualized in different contexts for different purposes. Specifically, the former is defined by the WHO as “individuals’ perceptions of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns”.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, the human development approach is “about expanding the richness of human life, rather than simply the richness of the economy in which human beings live. It is an approach that is focused on people and their opportunities and choices”.<sup>16</sup>

By no means, the social dimension of sustainable development is focused on contrasting poverties, narrowing inequalities, and emphasizing diversities.<sup>15</sup> Still before the spread of COVID-19, multidimensional inequalities among people and territories were rapidly increasing, and the perception of widespread and rising social injustice was fueling resentment, but no collective strategy of development followed. To make this happen in the post covid scenario, there is need of an explicit recognition of the cultural dimension to foster a generative approach to sustainable development. Throsby (1995) defines culturally sustainable development as a process that encompasses both the idea of cultural development in its own right, according to culture an independent and valued role within society, where culture is intended as a set of attitudes and practices that can be instrumental in supporting, constraining, and/or contributing to economic and social development in the widest sense (Throsby, 1995, p. 202). In brief, the cultural dimension of sustainable development may contribute to improve the individual and collective “conversion factors” of resources in functionings and capabilities (Kuklys & Robeyns, 2003). Furthermore, the cultural dimension of sustainable development may provide that “thrivability” placed by numerous authors at the basis of the alignment among prosperity, abundance, and wealth. A promising debate is ongoing on the linkage between the four concepts, and in a certain way it resembles that one concerning the three (or four) dimensions of sustainable development. Finally, and most of all, the cultural dimension may promote the alignment among identity dynamics and the process of resilient transformation toward sustainable development, in a context where, instead, there is a non-negligible risk that the resilient transformation toward sustainability may favour a “liquid” conception of life based on consumerism (Bauman, 2006) to the detriment of more desirable and authentic forms of human development.

To sum up, the analysis suggests how the cultural dimension may play a role in the implementation of the SDGs, especially in the social and territorial localities, as people and communities are the main SSEEOS’ stakeholders and valueholders, and the quality and the consistency of their tangible and intangible heritage may be a crucial determinant in the design and implementation of common and generative development strategies. Lying on these premises, this research introduces an extended version of the scheme proposed by Coraggio (2015) by adding a fourth sector of economic activity, that is, the global economy, in opposition to the popular economy.

Coraggio’s scheme contrasted three polarities (government, market, and popular economy), placing SSEEOS at the intersection. His approach is consistent with that one proposed by Nyssens (1997), and more in general with a vast literature conceptualizing SSEEOS as a third way between the market and the state. However, it seems appropriate to consider a fourth polarity, that is, that part of the economy focused on a technologically led development enabling global value chains pursuing increasing returns to scale (say, the global economy).

<sup>13</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-sustainable-development/what-is-esd/sd>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.who.int/tools/whoqol> <sup>16</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en/humandev>

<sup>15</sup> According to Talan et al. (2020), “From a social perspective, human wellbeing cannot be sustained without safe surroundings, a healthy environment and the presence of a vibrant economy that can fulfill all the basic needs of the communities residing nationally or globally. Government makes policies for the uplifting of social communities to achieve social sustainability but, alongside this, every nation needs informed citizens who participate actively. This is the essence of democracy and is essential for the protection of basic human rights. The three fundamental goals of social sustainable development are poverty reduction, social investment, and safe and caring communities. Nations, social communities and corporate communities are required to work together to achieve these goals”.

Consequently, on the one hand, an informal sector can be recognized, made of “unstructured economic activities” (Nyssens, 1997, p. 173). Since the recognition of an informal sector during Seventies, “both the popular economy developing in the big cities of the Third World and the nonprofit organizations emerging in the North have given rise to an abundant literature which questions existing theoretical frameworks”, as, by introducing “specific forms of socio-economic organization, these phenomena challenge the way in which modern models of development conceive of the market-state relationship” (Nyssens, 1997, p. 171). The popular economy is aligned in many ways with the solidarity economy because the actors often find collective ways to provide for social and economic needs (Kawano, 2013).<sup>16</sup> While the concept of SSE has been extensively analyzed in the previous sections, here the concept of popular economy deserves further attention. Specifically, the latter includes “a wide range of economic activities, developed individually or at a family level by the lower-income classes, with a specific economic rationality aiming to provide subsistence and reproduction of life of the members and their families” (van Zeeland, 2014, p. 2).

On the other hand, the main actors of the global economy are indeed large public and private organizations usually operating under monopolistic regimes at increasing returns to scale (state-owned enterprises, large multinational corporations, big-tech and digital platforms...). The global economy is the by-product of the space economy, that is, of the process of spatial development initiated after the end of the Second World War with the space race between the Western and the Eastern Block that led to disruptive innovations in the field of telecommunication and remote sensing, then to the advent of the world wide web and of personal computers, and finally to the popularity of mobile phones and smartphones after the beginning of the new Millennium. At the end of Nineties, the global economy dematerialized and evolved in the new economy, and in the last decade the latter triggered the digital revolution, generating pervasive spillovers on all sectors of social and economic life.

The interaction between the popular economy and the global economy (in particular, among SSEEOS and the new economy) may have either a cooperative, either a conflicting nature. In case of a conflict, people may perceive the global economy as a social construct legitimating a substantive expropriation of local resources, while public and private decision makers may overlook the local impacts of their decisions and may not consider SSEEOS as relevant partners or key interlocutors in the implementation of locally sustainable development policies. This vision is coherent with Nyssens' discourse over the rise of capitalism: “[t]he victory of capitalist industry resulted from the fight between two modes of production, the ‘local social productive’ one and that of the mercantile elite. [...] [I]t was not the industry rising up from the bottom which triumphed, but rather the industry imposed and imported by the big merchants and protected by the state” (Nyssens, 1997, p. 175).

On the other hand, by integrating Coraggio's scheme with the fourth pole of the global economy, it emerges an additional intersection with the social and solidarity economy (SSE) that may represent the space of the digital solidarity and cooperation, that is, a vast set of non-profit institutions pursuing goals as managing and reproducing the digital commons, fostering a sustainable use of natural resources, leading scientific research on climatic issues, preserving and deepening the ongoing digitalization process, evaluating new technologies for the exploration of outer spaces and fostering their re-use for socioeconomic purposes. Clearly, digital SSEEOS are gaining momentum within the SSE, especially in the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, as beside a short run effect of de-globalization, the digital revolution is becoming pervasive.

However, the digital revolution, if not supported by social and solidarity movements fostering a process of social innovation and cultural change, may raise issues concerning the persistence of multidimensional inequalities and the advent of new poverties, mostly related to the existence (and persistence) of a digital divide affecting a wide share of world population. Specifically, “almost half of the world's population is not connected, particularly in poor countries”, and less developed countries “had almost no fixed-broadband connections owing to the high cost and lack of infrastructure” (UN, 2020, p. 59). In this scenario, it is worth noting how digital SSEEOS are promoting citizens mobilization by means of virtual mutual aid networks, providing a significant contribution to the rise of a generation of local activists operating at a hyperlocal scale (Georgeou, 2020). This phenomenon may be contextualized in the broader process of digitalization of cultural and social relations triggered by the adoption of social distancing measures, and consequently is mostly rooted in the action of established grassroots initiatives (Georgeou, 2020). Furthermore, this process is creating new translocal networks by incentivizing the coalescence among local initiatives, providing an alternative and more desirable approach to the “liquid life” (Bauman, 2006) offered by globalized pattern of development.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.unrisd.org/thinkpiece-kawano&cntxt=F7711&cookielang=es>

## IMPLEMENTING THE SDGS IN THE LOCALITIES

To conclude the discussion on the role of SSEEEOs in implementing the SDGs in social and territorial localities, the research contributes to clarifying what a local context is and how it relates with the concept of place. To the purpose of this research, a local context is a portion of space, while a place is the multidimensional landscape (sensible and rational) that qualifies space (or a portion of it). Specifically, the notion of local context is opposed to the notion of global context, as they are at the antipodes of a continuum of geographic scales. Furthermore, the notion of place is contrasted to the notion of system, as the attractiveness of the former depends on its distinctive characteristics, while the latter emphasizes the instrumental and functional value of its elements.

**Table. 1. Local and global scales, places and systems**

		Spatial framework	
		Place	System
Geographic	Local	<b>Local places</b>	<b>Local systems</b>
scale	Global	<b>Global place</b>	<b>Global system</b>

Source: By author.

Of course, there is an interaction among local and global places and local and global systems, but as already discussed in a previous contribution (Salustri *et al.*, 2018) without the filter of intermediate institutions (regional, national, international...), a conflict may arise between local and global goals as well as between place-based and systemic approaches. If this is the case, the existence of intermediate bodies is of paramount importance in narrowing imbalances and turning potential conflicts into a synergic dialogue generating multidimensional benefits.

In this perspective, when discussing the implementation of the SDGs at the local scale, a first goal of the analysis should be that of identifying the alignment between global/local and placebased/systemic concerns. Furthermore, rational measures and concerns should be integrated with an assessment of the “unmeasurables” to have a complete picture of the phenomenon under inquiry. Moreover, the need of an institutional filter provided by intermediate public and private entities (i.e., state and market institutions populating intermediate scales) should be explicitly recognized and the intensity of the filter should be modulated accordingly.

Lying on these premises, it becomes manifest how the occurrence of a divergence in the evaluation of a phenomenon may depend on the scale adopted to measure its relevance, but also on the kind of value measured (intrinsic or instrumental, individual, or collective). Consequently, an evaluation may provide diverging results according to the perspective adopted (cultural, social, environmental, economic), where the four perspectives considered are obtained by intersecting geographic scales (local, global) and spatial frameworks of analysis (place, system).

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

During the last fifty years, beside state and market organizations, other players have entered in the social arena, and nowadays exert comparable, if not more relevant, influence on the outcome of political and economic processes. Consequently, it is of the utmost importance to overcome a binary conception of the institutional matrix (North, 1990) focused on market and public organizations, as the latter is nowadays more complex. The current “social mosaic” requires the elaboration and adoption of a broad perspective of analysis, that may encompass, on the one hand, a wide array of social and solidarity enterprises and organizations (SSEEEOs), and, on the other hand, those private and public organization that are contributing to the consolidation of the global economy.

This research has focused the attention on SSEEEOs. Specifically, it has been recognized how the latter exert a general commitment toward the globalization of solidarity. Furthermore, SSEEEOs advocate a systemic transformative change, especially in the social and territorial localities where the socioeconomic system fails in satisfying people and planet’s needs.

While recognizing the merit of the UNTFSSSE in identifying the role of the SSE in the implementation of the SDGs and in making publicly available a wide amount of information on SSEEEOs, it is worth noting how the “ethical and value-based” nature of the SSE and the flexibility of SSEEEOs’ organizations make this sector more “evanescent”

that what may be deducted by the well-defined and structural definition required to operationalize the concept. That makes SSEEOs' legal recognition a complex issue, that, however, cannot be overlooked, as the implementation of the principle of solidarity at socioeconomic level may be thought as a first step to satisfy common needs and aspirations concerning peace, quality of life, "unpolluted liberties", and digital freedoms within the consolidated framework of the welfare state (Pérez-Luño, 2016).

In fact, to unleash their full potential, SSEEOs need the support of public institutions, in terms of co-construction and co-implementation of supportive policies that may level the playing field with for-profit organizations according to a principle of equal treatment. On the other hand, as SSEEOs are made of people, to incentivize the participation in social and solidarity initiatives of those who are more exposed to the harshest consequences of the crisis, an improved access to healthcare, education, and a more pervasive income redistribution is needed. At political level, by anchoring mutualistic and solidaristic initiatives, SSEEOs contrast the individual propensity to elaborating exit strategies in response to societal challenges by incentivizing individuals to participating on voluntary basis in commoning and cooperative practices, and to operating some redistribution informally (Salustri, 2021). At economic level, SSEEOs may counterbalance the economies of agglomeration and proximity that characterize central places, by anchoring bottomup and inclusive initiatives that may trigger development in marginalized and peripheral localities. Finally, at technological level, SSEEOs may foster an inclusive knowledge economy by facilitating a shift from the ongoing process of commodification towards a process of commonification of patents and, more in general, of innovation.

At theoretical level, it is commonly accepted that SSEEOs' action encompasses the three dimensions of sustainable development (the social, the economic, and the environmental one), but a fourth dimension of sustainability in which SSEEOs play a major role can be recognized (i.e., the cultural dimension). Specifically, to elaborate a collective design of social advancement in a context characterized by people's resentment for the persistence of multidimensional inequalities and increasing social injustice, there is need of an explicit recognition of the cultural dimension, as the latter may enable generative approaches to sustainable development, rather than zero-sum games or regressive interactions that may put at risk the inclusiveness and universalism of this paradigm. Furthermore, notwithstanding a non-negligible risk that the resilient transformation toward sustainability may favour a consumeristic and liquid conception of life, the cultural dimension may promote the alignment among identity dynamics and the process of resilient transformation toward sustainability by providing stability in the work-life balance and people-centred approaches to development. Lastly, the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of people and territories may play a role in the implementation of the SDGs, as it may be a crucial resource in the design and implementation of common and generative local development strategies.

Theoretical advances need to find a confirmation in the structure of the institutional matrix, where, rather than cultural institutions, global actors seem to deserve specific consideration. Consequently, this research introduces an extended version of Coraggio's scheme by adding a fourth sector of economic activity, that is, the global economy, in opposition to the popular economy. The main actors of the global economy are indeed large public and private organizations usually operating under monopolistic regimes advocating an organization of business based on global value chains, enabled and supported by the digital revolution. Within the SSE, the integrated Coraggio's scheme leads to the identification of a relatively new area of action, namely the digital solidarity, in addition to the already established digital cooperation.

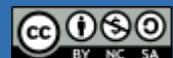
To conclude, if not supported by a process of social innovation and cultural change triggered by SSEEOs, the digital revolution may involuntarily support the persistence of multidimensional inequalities and the advent of new poverties, mostly related to the wide digital divide both within and among generations. On the other hand, the digital solidarity may contribute to creating translocal networks of local initiatives, that may provide an alternative and more desirable approach to the "liquid" and consumeristic life offered by the global economy. However, this process of "local reshoring" should be mediated by intermediate bodies (i.e., state and market institutions) to narrow imbalances and turn potential conflicts among the global and the popular economy into a synergic dialogue generating multidimensional shared benefits. In this perspective, mediators need to mature a transdisciplinary vision of social relations that may overcome those methodological boundaries supporting partisan approaches.

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# Identification of strategies for enhancing member commitment in Greek agricultural cooperatives: The opinion of cooperative experts



## Identificación de estrategias para mejorar el compromiso de los miembros en las cooperativas agrícolas griegas: la opinión de los expertos en cooperativas

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### ABSTRACT:

In the era of globalization, where competition is growing intensively, the cooperation between small scale farmers can assist them to be sustainable and survive. However, the situation with cooperatives in Greece is found to be on a downward trend due to their poor economic performance, which is later expressed by the diminished commitment of their members. In order to address the described problem we employed a qualitative study consisted of 10 guided interviewees with “cooperative experts”. Through the interviews the participants were asked to clarify their opinions on two major themes: 1) Common Greek cooperative issues, and 2) Suggestions on strategies employed by cooperatives to enhance members’ commitment. Through our analysis we identified the issues related to the poor management of the cooperatives of the past as the major problems of cooperative in Greece. Regarding the strategies for enhancing commitment of members, the majority of participants highlighted the importance of improving the communication and quality of information provided by the coop to its members for building strong bond of trust and ultimately enhancing their commitment. Although, the improvement of communication takes time and requires consistent effort. Hence, cooperatives may act on employing the appropriate experts in order to improve their process of production and marketing. Strengthening the levels of expertise in the economic activities of the cooperative may assist on the satisfaction of members and enhance their commitment to the coop.

### RESUMEN:

En la era de la globalización, donde la competencia está creciendo intensamente, la cooperación entre los pequeños agricultores puede ayudarlos a ser sostenibles y sobrevivir. Sin embargo, la situación de las cooperativas en Grecia se encuentra en una tendencia a la baja debido a su pobre desempeño económico, que luego se expresa por el menor compromiso de sus miembros. Para abordar el problema descrito se utilizó un estudio cualitativo compuesto por 10 entrevistados guiados con “expertos cooperativos”. A través de las entrevistas, se pidió a los participantes que aclararan sus opiniones sobre dos temas principales: 1) Problemas comunes de las cooperativas griegas y 2) Sugerencias sobre estrategias empleadas por las cooperativas para mejorar el compromiso de los miembros. A través de nuestro análisis identificamos los problemas relacionados con la mala gestión de las cooperativas del pasado como los principales problemas de las cooperativas en Grecia. Con respecto a las estrategias para mejorar el compromiso de los miembros, la mayoría de los participantes destacaron la importancia de mejorar la comunicación y la calidad de la información proporcionada por la cooperativa a sus miembros para construir un fuerte vínculo de confianza y, en última instancia, mejorar su compromiso. Sin embargo, la mejora de la comunicación lleva tiempo y requiere un esfuerzo constante. Por lo tanto, las cooperativas pueden actuar contratando a los expertos apropiados para mejorar su proceso de producción y comercialización. El fortalecimiento de los niveles de experiencia en las actividades económicas de la cooperativa puede ayudar a la satisfacción de los miembros y mejorar su compromiso con la cooperativa.

### KEYWORDS:

MEMBER COMMITMENT, QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS, COOPERATIVES.

### PALABRAS CLAVE:

COMPROMISO DE MIEMBROS, ANÁLISIS CUALITATIVO, COOPERATIVAS.





## RÉSUMÉ :

À l'ère de la mondialisation, où la concurrence est en plein essor, la coopération entre les petits agriculteurs peut les aider à devenir viables et à survivre. Cependant, la situation des coopératives en Grèce a tendance à baisser en raison de leur faible performance économique, qui s'exprime ensuite par le moindre engagement de leurs membres. Une étude qualitative composée de 10 personnes interrogées et guidées par des «experts coopératifs» a été utilisée pour résoudre le problème décrit. Au cours des entretiens, les participants ont été invités à préciser leur point de vue sur deux thèmes principaux : 1) les problèmes communs aux coopératives grecques et 2) les stratégies utilisées par les coopératives pour améliorer l'engagement des membres. À travers notre analyse, nous avons identifié les problèmes liés à la mauvaise gestion des coopératives du passé comme les principaux problèmes des coopératives en Grèce. En ce qui concerne les stratégies visant à renforcer l'engagement des membres, la plupart des participants ont souligné qu'il importait d'améliorer la communication et la qualité de l'information fournie par la coopérative à ses membres afin d'établir un lien de confiance solide et, à terme, de renforcer leur engagement. Toutefois, l'amélioration de la communication prend du temps et exige des efforts constants. Les coopératives peuvent donc agir en recrutant des experts appropriés pour améliorer leur processus de production et de commercialisation. Le renforcement des niveaux d'expérience dans les activités économiques de la coopérative peut contribuer à la satisfaction des membres et améliorer leur engagement envers la coopérative.

## RESUMO:

Na era da globalização, em que a competição está crescendo intensamente, a cooperação entre os pequenos agricultores pode ajudá-los a serem sustentáveis e a sobreviver. No entanto, a situação das cooperativas na Grécia encontra-se numa tendência decrescente devido ao seu fraco desempenho económico, que se traduz posteriormente no menor comprometimento dos seus associados. Para abordar o problema descrito, foi utilizado um estudo qualitativo composto por 10 entrevistados orientados por “especialistas cooperativos”. Por meio das entrevistas, os participantes foram convidados a esclarecer suas opiniões sobre dois tópicos principais: 1) Problemas comuns das cooperativas gregas e 2) Sugestões sobre estratégias usadas pelas cooperativas para melhorar o comprometimento dos membros. Através da nossa análise identificamos os problemas relacionados com a má gestão das cooperativas do passado como os principais problemas das cooperativas na Grécia. Em relação às estratégias para melhorar o comprometimento dos associados, a maioria dos participantes destacou a importância de melhorar a comunicação e a qualidade das informações fornecidas pela cooperativa aos seus associados para construir um forte vínculo de confiança e, em última instância, melhorar o seu comprometimento. No entanto, melhorar a comunicação leva tempo e exige esforço constante. Portanto, as cooperativas podem atuar contratando os especialistas adequados para melhorar seu processo de produção e comercialização. O fortalecimento dos níveis de experiência nas atividades econômicas da cooperativa pode contribuir para a satisfação dos associados e melhorar seu compromisso com a cooperativa.

## MOTS-CLÉS :

ENGAGEMENT DES MEMBRES, ANALYSE QUALITATIVE, COOPÉRATIVES.

## PALAVRAS-CHAVE:

COMPROMETIMENTO DOS MEMBROS, ANÁLISE QUALITATIVA, COOPERATIVAS.

## INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, where competition is growing intensively the cooperation between small scale farmers can assist them to achieve the needed production size for gaining market access (Bretos & Marcuello, 2016) as well as strengthen the local community. In Greece, the roots of cooperative movement are traced back to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and had a significant contribution to the development of the Greek rural economy (Lampos, 1999) by uniting farmers and increasing their countervailing power in the market.

Nowadays, the institution of cooperatives in Greece is facing a crisis. Since, Greek agricultural cooperatives are mostly small in size they weren't able to cope with the challenges posed by the global economic crisis of 2008 and encountered significant structural issues (Sergaki *et al.*, 2020). The past poor management regarding production and governing procedures combined with the lack of communication of market opportunities and financial transparency, resulted into a norm of low trust to the Greek cooperative institution. Consequently, the trust and commitment of young Greek farmers to agricultural cooperatives was deteriorated, since they report that they don't have incentive to enter or retain their membership to a cooperative organization (Kontogeorgos *et al.*, 2017). Hence, the downward course of the cooperative sector in Greece, among other things, is highly related to the disconcerted commitment of members to the institution of Greek agricultural cooperatives.

However, the vast majority of scientific studies on Greek agricultural cooperatives are focused on their financial performance and economic survival, while member commitment is presented as of secondary importance. Members' commitment to the coop is essential in order to form a common front for farmers as a competitive force against the increased competition of the globalized agro-food markets (Novkovic, 2008), with scale or scope economies.

In that sense, following recommendations by Kontogeorgos *et al.* (2017) regarding the importance of member commitment and the formulation of strategies for enhancing it, this paper addresses the gap in the literature with a qualitative study to identify the issues related to low levels of member commitment and the strategic decisions of coops for incentivize members to become more active, more committed and attract new members. Specifically, the research question is expressed as follows: Which are the main factors dictating the loss of commitment to Greek agricultural cooperatives and what strategies can be utilized for enhancing it? In this study the research question is addressed with a qualitative study with evidence collected through interviews of experts that have long experience in cooperative operations.

This paper's contribution is demonstrated by a qualitative method approach on opinions of "experts", related to the cooperative sector, for identifying strategies that aim on enhancing member commitment, a topic which has not received much explicit attention in the Greek cooperative academic literature. Using data provided by experts with long experience and relating them to the theoretical background of international literature, the qualitative study provides information on how cooperatives can formulate strategies to enhance their member's commitment subject to the diverse member motivational priorities such as economic benefits, additional services such as expertise in the planning of production and marketing, need for establishing market power and arising opportunities, structure of governance and communication quality. In particular, better price than the competition, vertical integration and specialization of production along with market access and stability are factors of high significance and can be further utilized as strategies to motivate members to retain their commitment to the collective enterprise.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides a literature background of the main themes of this study: a) The importance of member commitment, b) The importance of member satisfaction, c) Common problems related to the member commitment of agricultural cooperative structures in Greece, as well as, d) A framework of the factors influencing the member's satisfaction and long term commitment to the collective enterprise that could be utilized as cornerstone for the formulation of strategies for enhancing member commitment. The methodology of this study is described in Section 3. Section 4 presents the interpretation of the findings according to the information provided by cooperative experts on the explanation of common cooperative issues and their opinion on the strategies for enhancing commitment in Greek agricultural cooperatives. Finally, Section 6 presents the conclusions of this study, including a discussion of future research directions.

## BACKGROUND

### Common cooperative issues

On the other hand, the lack of commitment of cooperative members may result into a series of issues. By reviewing cooperative literature (Staatz, 1987; Grashuis, 2018; Van Dijk *et al.*, 2019, pp. 39-45), we identified six different categories of collective action problems which are highly related to member commitment, those are: (i) the free-rider problem, (ii) the horizon problem, (iii) the portfolio problem, (iv) volume problems, (v) the control problem, and (vi) incentive problems. The reasoning behind problems connected with low commitment is manifested in the heterogeneity of member's preferences and attitudes on cooperative operational structure, as also to personal characteristics and objectives such as farm size, risk attitudes, wealth and experience.

The above described issues predict certain behaviors that are stimulated from the loss of commitment of members to the collective enterprise. An example of member behavior resulting from low commitment is manifested by the non-participation attitude in the decision making assemblies (Kontogeorgos *et al.*, 2017). This behavior is rooted either in the dissatisfaction of the member with the ways the cooperative conducts business, or when the member fails to realize the cooperative as a business of his own.

### Factors influencing member commitment

There are several factors that affect the commitment of the member to the collective enterprise. These factors act as motives for a member and are mostly rooted in the benefits from intra-organizational attributes of the cooperative structure. The commitment of members is highly influenced by their individual attitudes on certain cooperative attributes (Dakurah *et al.*, 2005). Grashuis & Cook (2018), defined satisfaction of members' as a positive impact on the utility members' receive, from a diverse set of factors, when they conduct business with the co-op. They conclude that satisfaction is not only expresses the perceived positive impact in period  $t$ , but also predicts the members' behavior in period  $t+1$  regarding his commitment to the coop.

Member commitment is an individual attitude driven by the members' utility subject to their preferences of certain cooperative attributes (Kalogeras *et al.*, 2007; Morfi *et al.*, 2015) and therefore can be influenced by the implementation of a wide spectrum of strategies adopted by the co-op (Trechter *et al.*, 2002). Those strategies are diversified regarding their utility as motivational factors based on specific cooperative attributes, which are explained below. Namely, the relative coop attributes utilized in this study for formulating the strategies for enhancing commitment are: Economic benefits, Additional services, Market power, Cooperative governance, Communication, Control and Cooperative ideology.

### Economic benefits

According to Fulton (1999), the reasoning behind the choice of each economic agent to participate in a business structure is found in the benefits they desire to obtain from their participation. Thus, economic benefits provided by the coop can be argued to be the main motive for farmers on entering and remaining in the coop. By reviewing the international literature (Nishi & Kumar, 2011; Liebrand & Ling, 2014), we observed that monetary benefits and the stability of economic transactions provided by the coop, constitute significant factors for the satisfaction and long term commitment of members with the collective business. Price is the most evident determinant of demonstrating the farmers' commitment to the coop, since the members, as entrepreneurs trying to maximize their wealth, will always choose the organization that provides the best price for their produce (Fulton, 1999). Furthermore, the importance of cooperatives is found on the capability to vertically integrate the production by providing cheaper access to materials, supplies, transportation and storage facilities (Morfi *et al.*, 2015), which significantly improves individual cost efficiency.

### Additional services

Cooperatives are not only about creating economic benefits for the members, but provided them with the appropriate knowledge and expertise in order to expand or improve their operations. Specifically, cooperatives hire experts in order to fulfill the needs of members in terms of quality services (Tilahun, 2007) and technical support (Kalogeras *et al.*, 2007). Consequently, this may influence members toward a more favorable perception of their membership to

the organization. Additionally, high involvement to the coop give members the opportunity to acquire experience and expertise through participation in learning activities organized by the coop (Verhees *et al.*, 2015), such as training seminars. Furthermore, farmers' training through coop activities positively affects their wellbeing and enhances their satisfaction with the coop (Ishimwe *et al.*, 2016). Consequently, increased satisfaction may inspire loyalty to the farmers and lead them on attaining higher levels of commitment (Kokotas *et al.*, 2016).

## Market power

In contemporary times the role and business orientation of agricultural cooperatives is shifting. According to Kalogeras *et al.* (2007), members preferences on the strategic attributes of the coop are toward a more entrepreneurial and market-oriented organization, which exploits market intelligence and coordinates product quality to reach the expectations of existing and potential market segments. Several researches (Van Dijk, 1999; Cook & Chaddad, 2004; Kalogeras *et al.*, 2007) mention the adoption of customer-driven strategies from cooperatives, similar to those utilized by IOF organizational structures, to achieve better economic performance and satisfy the ambitions of their members and ultimately keep them committed. Jensen (1990) point out the high motivational importance of the function of the cooperative to provide an assured marketing channel to members, which has a significant impact on their attitude toward the collective enterprise. In addition, coops provide a safety net to small scale farmers, while by marketing their produce through the cooperative they are not obliged to bare the foul cost and risk of their economic activity (Van Dijk *et al.*, 2019, p. 30). This refers to a good organization of the marketing process.

## Cooperative governance

Following the assumptions of Verhees *et al.* (2015), there are three models of cooperative governance and their diversification is found on the agents and committees that have the first role in managing the collective business. The common ground between cooperative governance models is observed in the delegation of control rights and authority to the BoD, cooperative experts or a small group of cooperative patrons respectively. In all three models, members hold ex post control rights which are exercised in cases that the authority agents lead the coop to poor performance. In addition, Iliopoulos and Theodorakopoulou (2014), highlight the necessity of conflict resolution mechanisms, for resolving conflicts within the members group quickly and in a commonly acceptable fair way, as a prerequisite for the "healthy" management of collectively-owned enterprises.

## Communication

However, member's involvement through participating actively in governance procedures provides significant individual benefits by reducing the asymmetry of information between coop management and members (Verhees *et al.*, 2015). Good quality of information may assist on reducing transaction costs and strengthens social relationships between members and the coop by enhancing the feeling of belonging to a social group (Barraud-Didier *et al.*, 2012). In addition, when members acquire sufficient and accurate information may result in a competitive advantage for the coop over other IOF's because they identify opportunities faster and receive market information before their competitors (Boned & Mutuel, 2006). According to Trechter *et al.* (2002), strong communication between members, and members and the BoD have a significant impact on enhancing the members' commitment to the objectives and goals of the coop, since members identify the cooperative as a business of their own.

## Control

The governance of agricultural cooperatives is often commissioned to a small group of members or non-members. Fulton and Giannakas (2007) noted that the success of cooperative governing instruments is highly dictated by the type of leadership the members elect. If members perceive that agents in charge take decisions to fulfill their personal agenda instead of acting on their behalf, their commitment may be diminished (Fulton & Giannakas, 2001). Bhuyan (2007) discusses the members' involvement in committees for controlling the decisions of coop management as of great significance for the members' satisfaction with the cooperative. The involvement of members in meeting and assemblies has been proven to be vital for the performance of the coop due to its impact on increasing the efficiency of control and governing mechanisms (Österberg & Nilsson, 2009). The increased involvement in cooperative governance procedures, assist members to identify themselves with the common goals of their cooperative and strengthens their sense of affective commitment (Barraud-Didier *et al.*, 2012).



## Cooperative ideology

According to Fulton (1999), the member will conduct business with the partner that will provide him with the better outcome. Consequently, the member's commitment to the collective enterprise is dependent on how she perceives her membership to the coop. On the contrary, Morfi *et al.* (2015), highlighted that the majority of "loyal" Finish cooperative members are not considering their membership relationship with the coop as purely business oriented, due to their understanding of the long term tangible and intangible benefits of doing business collectively. Thus, they demonstrate their sense of cooperative ideology.

## METHOD

In order to address the described problem, we employed a qualitative analysis consisted of 10 guided interviews of cooperative experts (Trinczek, 2009). The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured approach with the provision to the participants of an interview guide. The interviews addressed a range of issues related to diminished member commitment in Greek agricultural cooperatives according to the participants' experience associated to the cooperative field. The participants were asked for their opinion on the issues contemporary Greek cooperative organizations are facing, the reasoning behind these issues, and finally their suggestions for the most optimal and applicable strategies aiming on enhancing the commitment of farmers to the Greek agricultural cooperatives, both individually (in a single coop) and institutionally (in Greek cooperatives as a form of institution).

## Participants

The interviewees were chosen either for their knowledge and experience on the cooperative organizational structure, for their knowledge and experience in the Greek agro-food market or for their academic expertise in the field of cooperative studies. The sample group was divided into three different sub-groups. The Academics sub-group was consisted of 4 (40%) individuals whose work provided significant value in the Greek and International cooperative literature. The Cooperative Elected Representatives group (mostly members that served on the BoD of cooperatives located in Crete, Greece) is represented by 4 (40%) people mostly from Cretan cooperatives with extensive experience in cooperative governance. While the cooperative consultant experts sub-group was represented by 2 (20%) individuals, which have extensive experience in the Greek state mechanisms and continuously monitoring Greek agricultural cooperative businesses both domestic and overseas. This classification is made to enable the in-depth interpretation of the concepts and ideas by taking into consideration the diverse roots of each participant's background which may dictate his/hers approach to the strategies for enhancing member commitment.

## Data collection

An interview guide was developed containing open-ended questions along with some general background questions, which illustrated the basis of all interviews. In the beginning, the interviewees were asked whether we have their permission to record the interview. The interviewed experts were provided with a copy of the interview guide and general information about the study. Where possible the interviewees received the interview guide several days earlier to enable them to reflect on the issues raised. During the arrangement of the guide to be sent to the interviewees and the arrangement of date and time for the interview, the first author (as interviewer) provided with the opportunity to interact with the respondents and establish a base of trust before the interview conducts.

Key questions outlined in the guide were:

- 1) What are the contemporary problems Greek coops are facing?
- 2) Which of the problems of Greek coops are related to the relationship with the members?
- 3) Which strategies you believe are very important for enhancing commitment in Greek coops?
- 4) Which strategy will you implement if you acted as president of the BoD, to enhance commitment in Greek coops?

In order to further investigate suitable strategies for enhancing member commitment we created an inventory of proposed strategies based on international literature for factors that influence member commitment. The expert interviewees were asked to evaluate the proposed strategies in a 3-point Likert scale (1=Not Important, 2=Important,

3=Very Important). The interviewees had the opportunity to propose an alternative strategy, than those presented by the authors, if they had the belief that none of them fitted their vision for enhancing commitment. After the evaluation of the strategies, the interviewees had to explain why they chose a strategy as “Very Important”. The present strategies and their reasoning are presented below in Table 1.

**Table 1: Strategies for enhancing commitment**

Strategy	Sample Items	Retrieved from
Economic Benefits	Increasing the value of economic benefits for the member by providing better prices for their product, cooperative dividends and improving cost efficiency (better price for fertilizers, medicines and production materials).	Fulon, (1999); Nishi and Kumar (2011); Liebrand and Ling (2014)
Additional Services	Enhancement on the additional services provided by the coop such as technical support (hiring experts) and training seminars.	Kalogeras et al. (2007); Tilahun, (2007); Ishimwe et al. (2016)
Market Power	Strengthening the position of cooperatives to the market by increasing bargaining power with market oriented strategies (Provide assured marketing channels, building strong brand name, increasing product and services differentiation).	Jensen (1990); Van Dijk (1999); Cook and Chaddad (2004); Kalogeras et al. (2007)
Cooperative Governance	Reconstruction of the governance structure of cooperatives and cooperative rules (e.g. the approach on how to solve disagreements between members)	Iliopoulos & Theodorakopoulou (2014); Verhees et al. (2015)
Communication	Increase communication between members and between members and the BoD to reduce asymmetry of information (more frequent briefings on market information) and increase economic transparency.	Trechter et al. (2002); Bijman and Verhees (2011); Verhees et al. (2015); Van Dijk et al. (2019)
Control	Increase control and evaluation both from member committees to the BoD and from the BoD to the members in order to establish a mechanism for ensuring that coop acts on behalf of the members and vice versa.	Trechter et al. (2002); Bhuyan (2007)
Cooperative Ideology	Promote the added value of cooperation and empower the members' sense of cooperative ideology through educational programs.	Flecha and Ngai (2014); Morfi et al. (2015); Verhees et al. (2015)

Source: Author's elaboration

All ten interviews were audio-recorded. The interviews were conducted via phone calls in November 2020, while coping with the restrictions and measures for managing Covid-19 pandemic. Notes made by the first author during the interview were kept also. The average duration of the interviews was estimated at about 45-60 minutes per respondent.

## Data analysis

The analysis of the data was conducted by examining and interpreting both the notes made by the author and the recordings of the interviewee's statements. Further, the transcripts were subjected to systematic verifiable analysis of themes and ideas. The base themes were divided to subcategories which were assigned with codes indicating their relation to particular larger concepts and ideas. Coding was then cross-checked and verified with the co-authors.

## Trustworthiness

In order to establish critical methodological precision to qualitative studies substantial attention should be given to the reliability and validity of the gathered data (Liedtka, 1992, p. 172). As this study is concerned, a plethora of factors may have influenced the validity and reliability of the findings. The sample selection was made in personal base through personal contacts and introductions which in turn reduced our ability to investigate a random sample of respondents.

In this study, participants were encouraged to reflect on their own most recent or current experience, related to cooperative institutions, as well as the incidents that happened in the past and they considered to be as more accurate to address the scope of this study. In the same time, through probing questions and field notes, the interviewer attempted to extract as much detail as possible from both their actual and emotional responses. The fact that the participants were to encourage to present “concrete incidents that are directly meaningful” to them personally illustrates the most suitable method to enhance this type qualitative research on field experts (Liedtka, 1992).

Finally, a crucial stage for the validity of the results is found on the presentation and interpretation of the findings. Especially, while the subject cooperatives as an area of investigation is complex, the responses of participants should be taken into consideration with relation to their personal experiential background, for each participant separately. In addition, an obstacle which may occur and diminishes validity in qualitative research is observed in the lost contextual detail during the transcription process, while transferring the answer from recordings to text. According to Liedtka (1992, p. 171), sufficient detail is needed to be included in the presentation of the findings to ensure that the respondents speak “in their own words”.

## PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

Two overall themes were emerged after analyzing the data. Firstly, the identified issues Greek cooperatives are facing were more or less standardized despite the variation between the different participant’s background and nature of involvement. The second theme to emerge was variety in individual responses on how to address the problems of low commitment of members to Greek agricultural cooperatives. The description of the data which follows encompasses, firstly, the identification of common major issues Greek agricultural coops are facing according to the participating experts experience, under sub-headings for each type of issue. Secondly, we summarize the suggestions made by the cooperative experts toward the enhancement of member’s commitment in Greek coops.

### What sort of problems contemporary Greek coops are facing?

Great uniformity between interviewee’s responses was evident in the description of the common major problems of cooperatives regarding their financial sustainability and relationship with members. Interestingly, and consistently with our conjecture of the bidirectional relationship between commitment and cooperative’s economic performance, participants in their majority related the diminished commitment of Greek farmers to cooperatives with the poor economic performance of the later. In our analysis we observed three sub-categories of issues faced by cooperatives resulting in poor economic performance and weakening their competitive position in the markets. Thus, poor economic performance combined with the low levels of cooperative ideology result in the diminishment of member’s commitment.

### Common characteristics of Greek cooperative members

There are common characteristics of Greek cooperative members which have a significant impact in the line of operations of cooperatives. The small farm size is a common issue and is closely related to the low levels of competitiveness of Greek coops, since the increased globalization of markets demand exponentially larger quantities. As a result cooperatives with small production volumes cannot meet the demands of business contracts both domestic and abroad.

“The allotment of the average Greek farmer is found to be small, the production sizes are also small. These contribute to a problematic profile of entrepreneurship and competitiveness in the primary sector”.

“The main problem facing Greek cooperatives is fragmentation; economies of scale cannot be pursued”.

In addition to the small farm size, several interviewed experts raised the issue of low expertise level of Greek farmers. According to 70% (7 out of 10) of participants, the level of expertise for the individual farmer in a cooperative is considered to be a determinant for achieving the needed levels of production and can further provide better insight on the decisions related to the product’s marketing procedures.

“The problems that Greek cooperatives are facing in my opinion are the problems that arise, and have to do, with marketing process; there is lack of expertise on finding the suitable markets to channel their products”.

“The cooperative is currently unable to meet the requirements of high impact marketing procedures in a market that is highly competitive”.

Regarding the personal characteristics of the members, cooperative experts with experience in the consulting services for cooperatives raised the issue of heterogeneity among members' preferences which resulted into “horizon problems” and lack of cooperative ideology.

“An equally big problem of Greek cooperatives is the heterogeneity in the member's ideology characteristics and preferences”.

“...farmers never felt the cooperatives as their own business. As a result, they didn't have the incentive to invest in the further development and growth of the cooperative due to differentiated horizon perspectives”.

## Problems of cooperative management

In the past, the cooperative institutions were highly related with the Greek political scenery. Due to the impact cooperatives had in the rural communities many political parties got involved in their organizational affairs. According to 40% of the participants (4 out of 10) the involvement of political parties in agricultural cooperatives is highly related with the diminishment of Greek farmers trust to the cooperative institutions.

“Vote-buying behaviors brought great distrust and alienated the people from the cooperative institutions”.

“The problems of mismanagement sprang from the intervention of political parties and pushed the cooperatives to operate outside the basic cooperative principles”.

“The governmental interventions that happened in the past in the cooperative enterprises sector turned the cooperative effort into purely contracting activities. In other words cooperatives operated outside of their basic principles and acted as middlemen for farmers to market their products”.

All of the participants (10 out of 10) highlighted the significant contribution of problems rooted in the dysfunction of the cooperative's management, both organizational and financial, for explaining the low levels of member commitment in Greek agricultural cooperatives.

“Greek cooperatives are facing many problems related to their organizational and operational management, which results in diminishing the trust of their members”.

“The poor quality of communication and information provided by the coops may be a cause of the diminishment of member's trust”.

The ineffective management on both production and marketing results into weakening the position of cooperatives in the market and was found to play a crucial role in the diminishment of their members' commitment. Therefore, it acts as a disincentive for farmers to conduct business with the cooperative and pushes them to the private sector.

## Attitudes of members

Other than the problems rooted in the diversity of the members' personal characteristics and the poor quality management of cooperatives, significant problems occur due to problematic behaviors of members. Specifically, by taking into consideration the fact mentioned above that members do not fully understand the cooperative as their own business members of Greek cooperatives often develop “free-rider” behaviors and non-participation attitudes.

The participant's statements regarding the frequency of the free-riding phenomenon was found to be differentiated relative to the nature of their involvement with cooperative business affairs. Specifically, participants that are related to small-scale cooperatives (30%, 3 out of 10) referred to the “free-rider” problem as not significant since they report that they never experienced extreme behaviors of free riders.

“Also, there is always the risk of the free rider (...) but members in our cooperative, due to the small size of the cooperative I suppose, has never shown such behaviors in the past”.



On the contrary, participants involved in the scientific research of cooperative structures referred to the “free-rider” phenomenon as of crucial importance for the viability of both small and big size cooperatives.

“Also regarding the members we can observe opportunistic behaviors in some degree, illustrated by some of the members (e.g the free rider problem). In my experience, these can occur in both small and large cooperatives”.

Regarding the non-participation of members, uniformly for all expert interviewees (100%, 10 out of 10), mentioned that its low levels explain the poor performance of Greek cooperatives. The non-active participation of members is mostly due to their lack of understanding the cooperative as their own business.

“A very important problem that Greek cooperatives have to face is that their members’ do not feel the cooperative as their own business and therefore they do not participate in decision-making processes”.

“A major problem we faced as a cooperative was found in the active participation of the members in the assemblies. Out of the 220 members in the assemblies, about 40 actively participate”.

All participants clarified that the members’ non-active participation behaviors are resulting from their low levels of commitment and can be expressed as a matter of member’s opportunistic behavior. On the other hand, the low quality of information provided by the coop combined with the member’s low levels of training and education on cooperative affairs may result to their alienation with their coop and ultimately drive their non-participating attitude.

“The first major problem of cooperatives lies in the fact that there is no participation of members because their wounds have not healed from the mismanagement of the past”.

“The reason why producers do not participate is due to the combination of management problems with the reduced financial results which lead to a lack of interest for the cooperative on behalf of the member and ultimately discourage his active participation”.

## Strategies for enhancing commitment

In order to address the described problems of diminished trust and commitment illustrated by coop members, the interviewees evaluated several strategies aimed on different cooperative attributes. Table 2 depicts the average score of the participants for all eight strategies formulated by the authors.

**Table 2. Strategies for enhancing commitment**

Strategies for enhancing commitment	Academics	Cooperative BoD Members	Counselors	Total Sample
Economic Benefits	2,25	3	1,5	2,25
Additional Services	2,5	2,25	1,5	2,08
Market Power	2	3	2,5	2,5
Cooperative Governance	2,75	1,75	1,5	2
Improvement of Communication	2,5	2,75	3	2,75
Control	2	2,75	2,5	2,42
Cooperative Ideology	2,25	2,5	3	2,58

Source: Author’s elaboration

The strategy that was evaluated as the most important among the total sample of the participants was the one referring to the improvement of communication between the coop management and the members. Other than the improvement of communication and quality of information provided by the coop, the interviewee's answers on the cooperative attributes were diversified according to their type of involvement experience with the cooperative sector. The sub-group of Academics evaluated as the most important strategy the restructuring of cooperative governance as of higher importance to the remaining strategies. As for the interviewees that served as members in cooperative BoDs' are concerned, they highly evaluated in their absolute majority the sufficient economic benefits and the enhancement of cooperative's market power as the strongest strategies for motivating the members to sustain their commitment. Finally, the sub-group of counselors, which was the shorter among the three sub-groups, evaluated as very important the strategies related to the improvement of communication, and the enhancement of the member's cooperative ideology.

## Economic benefits

Sufficient economic benefits provided by the coop is a factor commonly mentioned as of great significance for the enhancement of the member's commitment, since they ensure the wellbeing of the member and his/her family. All of the participants highlighted the necessity of the provision of fair prices for the member's produce as a prerequisite for the member's commitment to the coop. In addition the provision of cooperative dividends when there is surplus and the cooperative shop discount were mentioned as of supplementary significance for motivating the member to be more committed.

"...in order for a member to be loyal he must obtain financial benefits and in particular fair prices, this is very important".

"Relative to the production supplies (fertilizers, equipment, consumables etc.) the cooperative tries its best to provide them to farmers at very attractive prices and thus is an incentive for a producer to stay committed or become a member of the cooperative. Members have better prices than non-members".

"Financial results translated into surplus distribution, or the provision of immediate benefits through low or high prices may assist on motivating the members to be more committed".

Although, the provision of economic benefits through the cooperative organization is important, it has to be accompanied with the appropriate educational stimulus for the member and enhance her understanding on the cooperative mission. Otherwise, the member will treat the cooperative only as a commercial partner and will not sustain his commitment in times of poor economic performance.

## Additional services

The significance of the cooperative for the members can also be found in the value of the additional services provided. The majority of the participants (70%, 7 out of 10) highlighted the significant impact of additional services provided by the coop on motivating the members to sustain their commitment to the collective venture. The coop should provide functional solutions to the problems arising from the farmers' low levels of professional expertise. The effort by the coop should be made on solving production issues (eg. counseling for the suitability of crops in terms of market demand and soil conditions, plant diseases, reducing the cost of production by introducing contemporary methods etc.).

"Producers come and ask very often about technical issues with the crop so it is very important to have specialized staff in the cooperative for the technical support of the members".

"The satisfaction of members by cooperatives may be enhanced by providing high level of services (...) this may inspire members to understand that acting inside a coop business is for their own benefit".

"I think that the connection with the producers can be achieved by the specialized agronomist with constant support and assistance in the consulting part".



On the other hand, an interviewee opposed to the additional services provided by the coop to act as motives for inspiring commitment. Since, hiring specialized staff will significantly increase the cooperatives costs and consequently this action will not be feasible in the long term.

“Hiring specialized employees to advise the farmers may not support the whole spectrum of the production and therefore is going to raise the costs for the cooperative without providing increased efficiency. It is better for producers to turn to other private scientists as they choose...”

## Market power

The achievement of strong economic benefits springs from the combination of producing a product of good quality and furthermore from the effectiveness of the marketing process. Especially, according to all the member of the BoD members sub-group (Table 1) increasing the cooperative's market power is “Very important” for enhancing the member's commitment. Making contracts that will absorb the whole volume of production and finding markets that will provide stable prices for the products were among the activities mentioned that will motivate members to sustain their commitment to the coop, since it will provide security for marketing their products.

“Having an organized product promotion department like a good brand name is very important and is an incentive for someone to be a member of the cooperative”.

“For enhancing the member's loyalty the first is to formulate a business strategy by better organizing the marketing mechanisms and the existence of strategic planning, this may provide proof to members and keep them committed”.

“...the ability of the coop to absorb the entire range of products and place them on the market (...) Effectiveness and stability of distribution channels, may strengthen the farmers' trust and enhance their commitment to the coop”.

“We try to help in the part of marketing as much as possible, to organize an action plan for the marketing of the product of the cooperative. In other words, we aim on building a strong name in the foreign market in which the producers can depend on”.

Evidentially, Greek cooperatives mostly due to their small sizes are not able to meet the increased requirements of big supply chains. The increase in the market power of cooperatives in the globalized context is very important but extremely difficult to achieve and a lot of effort is required.

## Cooperative governance

Effective management is required for the satisfaction of both the members' needs and the achievement of the cooperative goals. According to 70% of the participants (7 out of 10), the management of Greek cooperative should be restructured toward the fulfillment of members' needs. Capable individuals in the according position in the cooperatives leadership is found to be crucial for sustain the member's commitment. In addition, coop leadership should inspire trust to the members in order for them to participate more actively in the coop affairs and increase its social capital value.

“There must be a reconstruction of cooperative rules and ways of administration, separation of powers and a framework for cooperation between them, in order for the members to have trust in the organization”.

“...the cooperative must investigate the problems of its members and to propose appropriate solutions. (...) This could provide a basis for increasing member satisfaction and consequently their commitment, enhance the members feeling that the cooperative is above their problems and takes care of them”.

“Firstly, cooperative leadership should be consisted of people who have knowledge on practice of management as well as marketing, to provide fair economic results. Secondly, they should treat the members with respect, exploring their needs and problems in order to provide solutions. If all this is done the member will gain confidence and will be able to understand potential poor economic results”.

## Improvement of communication

In contemporary times information is essential for coping with the requirements of the increased competition of globalized markets. Furthermore, as highlighted by the majority of participants 80% (8 out of 10), transparency in the cooperative activities is a prerequisite for the sustainability of its successful operation. Additionally, is the leadership's obligation to consistently try to improve the quality of provided information and value of communication, in order for the member to sustain his commitment to the collective enterprise.

“Cooperatives should seek ways or communication techniques that will allow the members to understand the decisions of the BOD and be persuaded that the cooperative management act on their behalf”.

“Mainly we focused on enhancing the information for the production procedure in order to inspire motivation for our members”.

“Something I consider very important is that the cooperative should not to be arrogant towards the members and to inform them at all times about WHAT the coop does and HOW it does it!”.

Specifically, the communication techniques mentioned by the participants were mainly focused on: organizing production seminars, information booklets and the emergence of electronic platforms (websites), where members can acquire all the desirable information. These methods are aiming on enhancing the expertise level of members as well as establishing that the cooperative act on their behalf.

“Enhancing communication between members is much more important especially for their commitment. If the market power falls and the communication between the BoD and the members is poor the member's trust and commitment to the coop will be diminished”.

“...we printed an information leaflet on the basic principles of cultivation to decongest the confusion in the information in order to better inform the producers (...) we have established an information network to which the producer can turn at any time and receive the information he needs”.

“To enhance commitment I suggest the emergence of a software (platform) that will allow members to have access anytime to basic information related to cooperative matters in terms of production, economic state and management”.

As depicted in Table 1, the strategy referring to the improvement of communication as a motive for stimulating commitment was evaluated as the most important ( $\geq 2,5$ ) by all the three sub-groups of expert interviewees with an average score of 2,75.

## Control

The cooperative operations are defined from the farmer's willingness to cooperate with others in order to obtain the benefits he/she requires. However, control mechanisms consists a necessity for ensuring the proper functioning of all the arrangements inside the cooperative framework. On one hand the cooperative decisions should be controlled by member committees consistently. Ensuring the proper function of the cooperative management by members was found to be significant for the member's participation in the cooperative assemblies.



40% of the participants (4 out of 10) mentioned the intensification of control in cooperatives as essential for its proper function.

“...it is necessary for the member to control through committees the activity of the governing council for its attitude towards the farmers and the cooperative as a joint venture. In other words to control based on the objectives”.

“Assigning management responsibilities to the members of the cooperative like participating in committees and other activities will give them a sense of ownership for the cooperative venture”.

On the other hand the cooperative leadership should control their members for keeping their promises and not choose to free-ride, both in terms of quality and quantity provided to the coop. While, the farmers should respect their covenant in order to meet the requirements of business contracts with external partners. Ultimately, strong business contracts will provide significant economic benefits which are crucial for the viability of the coop.

“...the second is to intensify the control over the farmers for the observance of the regulations, which will result from the consistency and the organization in the governance of the cooperative”.

“It is very important to have control by the Board of Directors to the members for ensuring the fulfillment of commercial arrangements and compliance with the coop rules”.

## Cooperative ideology

As the cooperative ideology of members' is concerned, the answers of the participants were diverse regarding its level in Greek coop members. According to Table 1, the sub-group of cooperative counselors referred to the enhancement of cooperative ideology as the most important strategy for enhancing commitment. Specifically 40% of interviewees (4 out of 10), mentioned that by educating the farmers by promoting cooperative ideology will drastically empower their commitment to the cooperative. In this sense, members with better understanding of the cooperative principals will be more understanding in times of poor economic performance and will not turn to the private sector when the prices are lower for the cooperative. They suggested that cooperatives should constantly seek ways to educate their members toward the importance of the cooperative structure through educational seminars and activities.

“Cooperatives should educate their members, in the sense of explaining to them what a cooperative is. I have had the opportunity to talk to people who were preparing to form a cooperative and through the conversation I realized that people did not know what a cooperative is”.

“Given the increasing globalization, things are becoming more and more difficult. The members must understand that the cooperative is the vehicle that will lead it to ensure its prosperity in order to face the globalization of markets”.

“The strengthening of cooperative ideology is very important because the member must understand that the cooperative is also his, his own business. I was very impressed when I realized that they did not realize it. They treated the coop like a shop and in case someone else gave them a better price then they would sell their products there”.

## CONCLUSIONS

By briefly examining the interviewees' answers we realized that commitment of members in Greek cooperatives is diminishing. This is mostly due to the mismanagement issues of the past and the present weak competitive power of the cooperative in the context of globalized markets. Consequently, opportunistic behaviors of members arise

and create big confusion to the cooperative operations. Those behaviors are rooted either in the dissatisfaction of the member with the organization of commercial activities, or when the member fails to understand the coop as his/hers own business. In both situations is the cooperatives objective to act on behalf of the members and provide proof of doing so, in order to increase the member's sense of commitment. The provision of strong economic benefits, as suggested by the sub-group of BoDs members, is a strong motivational factor for inspiring commitment, although it is highly dependent on external environmental factors which the coop cannot easily predict. Thus, the cooperatives in Greece in order to enhance the level of commitment of their farmers have to implement strategies toward two key directions.

Firstly, as highlighted by the total sample of interviewees and specifically the cooperative counselors, the cooperatives should emphasize on increasing the quantity and quality of communication with their members in order to build a strong bond of understanding with them. This could provide both opportunities and stability, since members will be able to realize market opportunities and act toward them. In the same time, by increasing the value of communication, members may show greater understanding in times that the cooperative financial results will not be as well as expected. A matter of great significance to the strategy aiming on enhancing communication with members is the employment of educational seminars for informing member and non-member farmers about the benefits of cooperation and its utility as a mean to overcome the challenges posed by globalized markets and increased competition. This could provide contingencies on shielding the members' sense of commitment toward the cooperative by fully understanding that the cooperative is a business of his/her own. In other words, high levels of commitment may be achieved by strengthening the member's sense of cooperative ideology. Secondly, cooperative should act toward the training and education of farmers on matters of both production and marketing operations. Consequently, members will expand their specialized knowledge and they will be more capable on organizing their economic activity toward the achievement of the common goals.

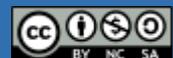
Finally, regarding the coop management, following the suggestions made by academics of cooperative research field we draw the conclusion that the cooperative should be staffed with specialized professionals with knowledge on the production and marketing procedures as well as the financial management. By taking into consideration the good quality of the soil-climatic conditions of Greece combined with the modernized techniques provided by the above mentioned strategy, the cooperatives could focus on addressing specific market segments with high standards in quality of agricultural products. Hence, if the cooperative enhances its business operations and methods of communication, the members will be able to fully understand the significance of their membership in the collective enterprise. In this sense, their commitment will be enhanced and they will acquire significant motivation for further investing in the cooperative. The establishment of proper functional mechanisms may encourage members to increase their participation as well.

The themes identified in this study also have implications for further academic work in the cooperative research area. Since the number of cooperative experts interviewed was small, further quantitative studies need to be employed to examine the relevance of the themes in larger populations. The opinions of members of cooperatives need to be investigated from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives to identify the relevance of the themes identified here from the member's perspective. The findings of studies similar to this one would inform practical responses to the low commitment problem of Greek cooperatives and indicate whether the tentative suggestions we have made above can be useful to differentiated cultural contexts.



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## Impacto económico y social de la pandemia de COVID-19 en el emprendimiento de mujeres inmigrantes en Roma: amenaza frente a oportunidad

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### ABSTRACT

The study extends a research already presented at the VII CIRIEC Conference and aims to elaborate, test and disseminate a scale for assessing the socio-economic impact of migrant female enterprises on their communities and their resilience capacity to the COVID-19 crisis. The research analyses four different areas: employment, economic growth and innovation, economic relations with the country of origin and local communities. The study consists of three different stages: 1) Mapping of migrant female entrepreneurs (from Ukraine, Moldavia, Peru and Ecuador) in the City of Rome; 2) structured questionnaires; 3) in-depth interviews. Finally, a qualitative analysis is developed on a selection of 4 paradigmatic case studies. Thus, the research assesses the socio-economic impacts of migrant enterprises on the well-being of local communities and defines resilience strategies deployed by migrant enterprises in the fight against COVID-19, as well as the emerging needs of migrants' enterprises induced by the crisis.

### RESUMEN

El estudio amplía una investigación ya presentada en la VII Conferencia CIRIEC y tiene como objetivo elaborar, probar y difundir una escala para evaluar el impacto socioeconómico de las empresas de mujeres migrantes en sus comunidades y su capacidad de resiliencia ante la crisis COVID-19. La investigación analiza cuatro áreas diferentes: empleo, crecimiento económico e innovación, relaciones económicas con el país de origen y las comunidades locales. El estudio consta de tres etapas diferentes: 1) Mapeo de emprendedoras migrantes (de Ucrania, Moldavia, Perú y Ecuador) en la ciudad de Roma; 2) cuestionarios estructurados; 3) entrevistas en profundidad. Finalmente, se desarrolla un análisis cualitativo sobre una selección de 4 casos de estudio paradigmáticos. Por lo tanto, la investigación evalúa los impactos socioeconómicos de las empresas migrantes en el bienestar de las comunidades locales y define las estrategias de resiliencia desplegadas por las empresas migrantes en la lucha contra COVID-19, así como las necesidades emergentes de las empresas migrantes inducidas por la crisis.

### RÉSUMÉ :

L'étude développe une recherche déjà présentée à la VIIe Conférence CIRIEC et vise à élaborer, tester et diffuser une échelle pour évaluer l'impact socio-économique des entreprises de femmes migrantes sur leurs communautés et leur capacité de résilience face à la crise COVID-19. La recherche analyse quatre domaines différents : l'emploi, la croissance économique et l'innovation, les relations économiques avec le pays d'origine et les communautés locales. L'étude comporte trois étapes différentes : 1) cartographie des femmes entrepreneuses migrantes (d'Ukraine, de Moldavie, du Pérou et d'Équateur) dans la ville de Rome ; 2) questionnaires structurés ; 3) entretiens approfondis. Enfin, une analyse qualitative est développée sur une sélection de 4 études de cas paradigmatiques. Ainsi, la recherche évalue les impacts socio-économiques des entreprises migrantes sur le bien-être des communautés locales et définit les stratégies de résilience déployées par les entreprises migrantes dans la lutte contre COVID-19, ainsi que les besoins émergents des entreprises migrantes induits par la crise.

### RESUMO

O estudo amplia uma investigação já apresentada na VII Conferência CIRIEC e visa desenvolver, testar e divulgar uma escala para avaliar o impacto socioeconômico das empresas de mulheres migrantes em suas comunidades e sua capacidade de resiliência perante a crise da COVID-19. A investigação analisa quatro áreas diferentes: emprego, crescimento econômico e inovação, relações econômicas com o país de origem e comunidades locais. O estudo consiste em três fases distintas: 1) Mapeamento de empreendedoras migrantes (da Ucrânia, Moldávia, Peru e Equador) na cidade de Roma; 2) questionários estruturados; 3) entrevistas em profundidade. Finalmente, uma análise qualitativa é desenvolvida de uma seleção de 4 estudos de caso paradigmáticos. Portanto, a investigação avalia os impactos socioeconômicos das empresas migrantes no bem-estar das comunidades locais e define as estratégias de resiliência oferecidas pelas empresas migrantes na luta contra a COVID-19, bem como as necessidades emergentes das empresas migrantes induzidas pela crise.

#### KEYWORDS:

SOCIO-ECONOMIC  
IMPACT, FOREIGN  
ENTERPRISES IN ROME,  
FEMALE ENTERPRISES.

#### PALABRAS CLAVE:

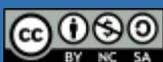
IMPACTO  
SOCIOECONÓMICO,  
EMPRESAS EXTRANJERAS EN  
ROMA, EMPRESAS FEMENINAS.

#### MOTS-CLÉS :

IMPACT SOCIO-  
ÉCONOMIQUE,  
ENTREPRISES ÉTRANGÈRES  
À ROME, ENTREPRISES  
FÉMININES.

#### PALAVRAS CHAVE:

IMPACTO  
SOCIOECONÔMICO,  
EMPRESAS ESTRANGEIRAS  
EM ROMA, EMPRESAS  
FEMININAS.



## CHARACTERISTICS OF FEMALE MIGRANT ENTERPRISES IN THE LITERATURE

In its continuous evolution, the phenomenon of immigrant entrepreneurship has been the focus of numerous studies aimed at illustrating how and why immigrants have undertaken entrepreneurial initiatives, the factors of success and their characteristic elements.

Comparing the characteristics of migrant women entrepreneurs with general studies on female entrepreneurship, there are obviously many points of contact, but there is also distinctive evidence of the migration phenomenon in MFEs.

On average, migrant female enterprises, like female enterprises in general, are small, recently established and operate in the service sector. However, for example, the aspiration to independence as a motivation for entrepreneurship is much less dominant in ethnic women entrepreneurs than in general women entrepreneurs. In terms of the perceived obstacles to entrepreneurship, ethnic women entrepreneurs are affected by language difficulties and the lack of education in the country of establishment (Baycan-Levent, 2010, p. 231).

Some other food for thought comes from the statistics on the level of education: on average, women entrepreneurs in Europe are better educated than male entrepreneurs. While the percentage of college graduates between men and women is similar, the percentage of female entrepreneurs with a more advanced education path is higher (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Italy, 2018, p. 19). Therefore, it seems legitimate to assume that the level of education of migrant women affects the entrepreneurial choice motivated by the search for opportunities to enhance professional skills.

In recent years, a number of studies have been trying to explore the contribution that women can give to a more equitable and efficient development pattern. According to some studies, women entrepreneurs are more socially responsible: they demonstrate a greater ability to pay attention to stakeholders, both internal and external to the company. 62 % of female businesses adopt at least 2 out of the 3 behaviors considered socially responsible such as attention to the welfare of employees, relationality with local stakeholders, and relationality with customers (Unioncamere, 2019, pp. 4-5). This socially responsible oriented behavior can be an element of competitiveness of migrant female businesses.

The results of numerous studies show that immigrant women entrepreneurs represent a potential source of economic growth: they grow faster than the businesses of native women or immigrant men, develop transnational activities and expand their economic ties not only to their countries of origin but also to other destinations, thereby fostering international trade.

Women entrepreneurs of immigrant background are not only creating jobs for themselves, they also stimulate job creation by hiring other employees, and often offer employment opportunities to other migrants (Baycan-Levent, 2010, p. 235).

Other studies have focused on assessing forms of contribution different from economic contributions made to host societies by immigrant women entrepreneurs. Significant involvement in various community organizations engaged in voluntary activities has emerged (Ambrosini, 2017, p. 24).

The comparison with the existent literature on female migrant enterprises leads to the point that, however, the topic of socio-economic impact of women's enterprises has still not been explored in depth. An objective of the empirical research in this paper is to give a contribution to fill this lack by going deeper into the evaluation of the potential economic and social impact of enterprises managed by immigrant women and their resilience capacity to the COVID-19 crisis.

## FEMALE MIGRANT ENTREPRENEURSHIP: THE ITALIAN AND ROMAN CONTEXTS

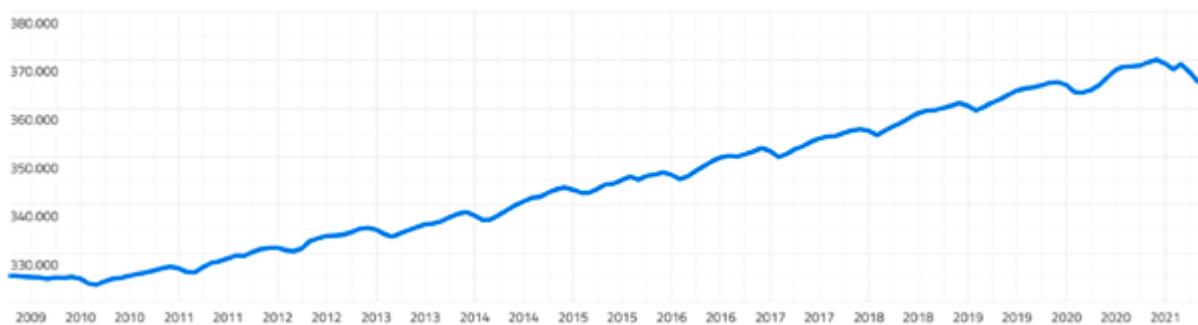
In this paragraph, a deductive analysis of the Italian and Roma contexts will be carried out. Starting from the evolutions in the Italian entrepreneurial landscape, we will gradually zoom in the Roman scenario, trying to carve out the picture of migrant businesses out of the general context. This framing will be propaedeutic to the understanding of the analysis of this given entrepreneurs' share behaviour in the response and recovery phases of the COVID-19 pandemic. 2020's pandemic struck the Italian entrepreneurial context quite a lot. In a country where the small and medium enterprises represent a skyrocketing percentage —among 70 % and 90 %, according to different definition criteria such as employees number, annual turnover, etc.— the impact of COVID-19 related restrictive measures has been a real economic threat which literally crippled many of them.

According to ISTAT<sup>1</sup> (Rapporto Competitività, 2021), by the end of 2020 the 32,4 % of the enterprises considered undermined their possibility of survival in the first 2021's semester; the main hazards, in this sense, were perceived to be: the decrease in the national demand and the illiquidity deriving from it. The size of the enterprise is a factor that seems to be intertwined quite tightly with its endemic fragility: in fact, 45 % of small enterprises (here considered as those with 3 to 49 employees) run a so called "structural risk": if exposed to a violent exogenous crisis, their activity would be seriously endangered by the consequences deriving from the economic shock; almost 60 % of them declared to need a staff reduction as a coping strategy, against the 26 % of those having 50 or more employees. In terms of sectors, those mostly affected are: travel agencies and all the stakeholders of the tourism supply chain, the arts and entertainment industry and all the restaurants and food related businesses (ISTAT, 2021).

In general terms, some strategies emerged as the most commonly adopted by business owners. These are: digital transformation with a vertical focus on e-commerce strategies and the redefinition of the business model, especially of the products/services offered. Alongside, another strategy widely used by small enterprises has been the use of financial instruments such as bank lending. This one, nonetheless, appears to be a "buffer strategy" as the tendency seems to lead to a generalized deleveraging (ISTAT, 2021).

Zooming on the Roman context (figure below), we can witness a quite irregular fall (compared to the trend) in coincidence of the pandemic start. The steep flexion during 2021 shows quite emblematically the difficulties addressed by a huge share of businesses in the very first aftermath of the pandemic.

**Figure 1. Active businesses in Rome between 2009 and 2021**



Fonte: Camera di Commercio delle Marche (2021).

The parameters of such a fall seem modelled quite symmetrically to the national indicators examined at the start of the section. According to the "Indagine Congiunturale di CNA di Roma - Secondo Semestre 2020", even though the second 2020 semester registered a slight improvement compared to the first one, there has still been a huge regression compared to 2019. Even in the circumscribed context of the Italian capital, the 80 % of the businesses significantly reduced the annual turnover and one third of them had to cut the staff (Repubblica, 2021). The most soundly affected have been those in the 2-9 employees range and the most widely used strategies to mitigate the adverse economic trend resulted to be: digitalization (59 %), staff training (42 %), website creation and e-commerce enhancement (41 %) (CNA Roma, 2021).

Further zooming on a specific sort of enterprises: migrant businesses, data show a massive increase in the last 10 years (+29,3 %). In this framework, in the 2019-2020 biennium, the number still kept on increasing (+2,3 %), holding on notwithstanding the sudden pandemic related slowdown. Clearly, data are still preliminary and deeper studies would be needed in order to double check the veracity of these assertions (Melis, 2021).

<sup>1</sup> National Italian Statistic Institute.

An interesting study from Unioncamere (2020), analyzes the evolution of migrant businesses in the Latium region in the first 2020 semester, when the biggest general lockdown took place in Italy. Even though 1751 migrant businesses shut down in those months, still 2775 new ones opened, with a positive balance of more than 1000. In Rome, the growth rate of this category still kept a positive value with +1,2 % in the semester (Unioncamere, 2020).

## QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS

Some of the business women who participated in the quantitative research phase own enterprises with high socio-economic impact, entrepreneurial success stories and of innovation practices adoption. These entrepreneurs were invited to participate in the qualitative phase, the in-depth interview, with the purpose of investigating the key elements of success, the socio-economic contribution made to the various communities, the socio-economic effects of the pandemic, innovations and, possibly, best practices.

### Qualitative analysis case study. Case Study ID: U5

One of the most interesting cases is that of a young Ukrainian businesswoman, living in Italy for seven years. She is the owner of a tailor's shop in Ukraine and has used her past experiences by starting up a tailor's shop in Italy together with her husband. In our research of 2019, the business was classified as an innovative FME. During the interview she confirmed that her business was affected by the impacts of COVID-19, but she put in place a number of interventions which helped her to expand the business.

In details:

- Supply of new services and production of new goods:

"At the beginning of the pandemic we started the production of masks in order to secure a stable income for our business as we figured out that the market demand was very high. Later we decided to provide new services and began to work with leather, fur, custom embroidery and upholstery. To our surprise, our income today is even greater than before the emergency".

So, at a first moment, the entrepreneur adapted her business to the emergency, then she was able to recognize new tendencies and opportunities.

- New positioning strategies:

"During the pandemic, we decided to position ourselves not just as tailors, but also as specialized stylists...so today we reach a wide target of customers".

The company has redefined its business, raising the target market segment.

- Increased presence on "social" media:

"We increased our social presence to reach new customers and retain present customers...we opened Instagram and Facebook accounts and invited our customers to join. It worked and it wasn't so difficult. Thanks to digital technologies, we have improved the relationships with our customers".

The use of new ICTs accompanied and strengthened the launch of new products and the new positioning strategies.

- Strengthening of social relations within the migrant community:

"We are collaborating with the Ukrainian Church present in Rome to represent our nation in cultural festivals. This year we will be part of the Ukrainian delegation to the "Festa dei Popoli" as stylists, presenting traditional Ukrainian clothes, and also as singers presenting folk dances and songs. For us it is an opportunity to promote the culture and the identity of the Ukrainian people".

So, the linkages with the migrant community were perceived as a source of resilience.

- Expansion strategies:

"We thought the only way out of the crisis was to diversify the business. Then, as the quantity of our services increased, we decided to open another business".

### Qualitative analysis case study. Case Study ID: U6

There are also several cases where the strategies adopted to face the pandemic crisis were non-enough. In fact, we interviewed a woman entrepreneur, owner of four B&Bs who, despite a new rent approach, did not get to maintain a satisfactory turnover.

“We adopted some resilience strategies: we tried to reach a different target of customers allowing long stays up to one year. Unfortunately, that did not bring any effect. Two locations out of six have been definitely closed (...). I feel disarmed, I can’t wait to get back to normal. The tourism sector has suffered a lot because of this emergency. The whole system has had to stop. It’s not easy to adopt any strategies when the whole tourism industry is blocked”.

In this case, it is possible that the specific factors of migrant entrepreneurs did not help to cope with the crisis and may have been an additional hindering factor. The foreign tourist market was blocked and the strategy of reorienting the business towards long-term visitors failed.

### Qualitative analysis case study. Case Study ID: P6

The Case Study P6 deals with a female immigrant entrepreneur who moved to Italy a few years before 2000. She originally created a Ltd which later on converted into an individual firm in the central/eastern quadrant of the city. She runs a services firm, where people can go for paperwork handling and management. In our previous research, she was classified as a successful entrepreneur in a traditional sector.

For her, during the general 2020 lockdown in Italy (March 9<sup>th</sup> to May 18<sup>th</sup>) there has not been a business volume reduction but only an organizational change: she was forced to physically shut down the office but, due to the nature of the service offered, she could convert it through new communication channels such as whatsapp, emails or even “delivery service”.

Both the nature of the administrative service and the creativity of the entrepreneur made such a virtuous adaptation possible.

Looking at the future, she said that this experience was important to make her understand that she needs to invest in technology: from a website reformation (it needs to be thinner and easier for the customer) to experts’ consultancy, she feels that this is a side of the business that just can’t be neglected or underrated anymore. The pandemic experience created new rooms for investments in ICT. She said:

“The next step I want to do is for sure the digitalization of my business: I would like every client to have the possibility of opening a digital folder ad hoc for himself”.

In this perspective, she recently activated the web localization of her activity, which already gave some good results.

Financially, she had to ask for a rent payment delay for the first month and then a favorable government funding with low interests, which she already started to pay back. It was not difficult to do for her, the only difficulty was with the timing, because the money arrived after the hardest months hit. So, she was actually able to program her financial needs and access relief measures provided by the Italian Government.

### Qualitative analysis case study. Case Study ID: P27

This case study, P27, told us that her lockdown experience was, on the one hand an opportunity to have some recollection time with her family, on the other hand though, it has been a severe shock for her business. She has been running a small tailor’s shop in a central neighbourhood of the city for around 20 years and before the lockdown started she used to employ 4 migrant workers. In our 2019 research, this business was profiled as an experienced traditional enterprise. After the restrictive measures hit, she had to cut her staff, keeping only one full time employee plus a part time one. About this she said:

“I had to choose, you know how I usually am pro-women, but I had to keep Moussa (a gambian male worker), he is my most competent and kindest employee”.

So, the western african male traditional competence in tailoring was a source of resilience for that business from the supply side.

She kept on saying:

“Luckily we had the possibility to breathe a little bit (financially speaking) thanks to the new need in the market: face masks. In those weeks in which face masks seemed impossible to find, I have been asked to produce a lot of them and people were ready to overpay for them. So I kept on working with my shop door shut. I was getting orders and secretly producing them inside the shop, without opening to the public... Later on, in September and October the city started to shut down again and I contracted Covid too, so the workflow suddenly stopped and since when I got back it didn't really return to pre-pandemic levels”.

In terms of strategies, she didn't really implement any. What she did can be mainly considered as an emergency reaction. She says that this crisis made her think about the need to digitally convert her business as much as possible through a website and social media, nonetheless she does not really define herself as a technologic person and this is what is holding her from starting this process; the only thing she embarked on in this perspective is the logo design, which should be ready soon.

Financially, she had to resort to layoff for two employees and she got government's aid that she defines as “derisory”; moreover, she managed to get her rent price lowered from the property owner. Nonetheless, she told us:

“I could have asked for some easy money lending from the government, but I don't want to be in debt anymore, also because this crisis won't be over in a year or two. I want to go on with my own resources. Luckily, I have some savings aside and in this troubled period I could use them. I believe that I still haven't adopted any strategy, I am observing the situation and preparing the business to sell online and to undergo a digital transition”.

Such a wait-and-see strategy was only possible thanks to her forward-looking attitude which enabled her to accumulate savings during her long stay in Italy.

## PROFILES OF MIGRANT FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS BUILT ACCORDING TO THE IMPACT AND THE REACTION TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

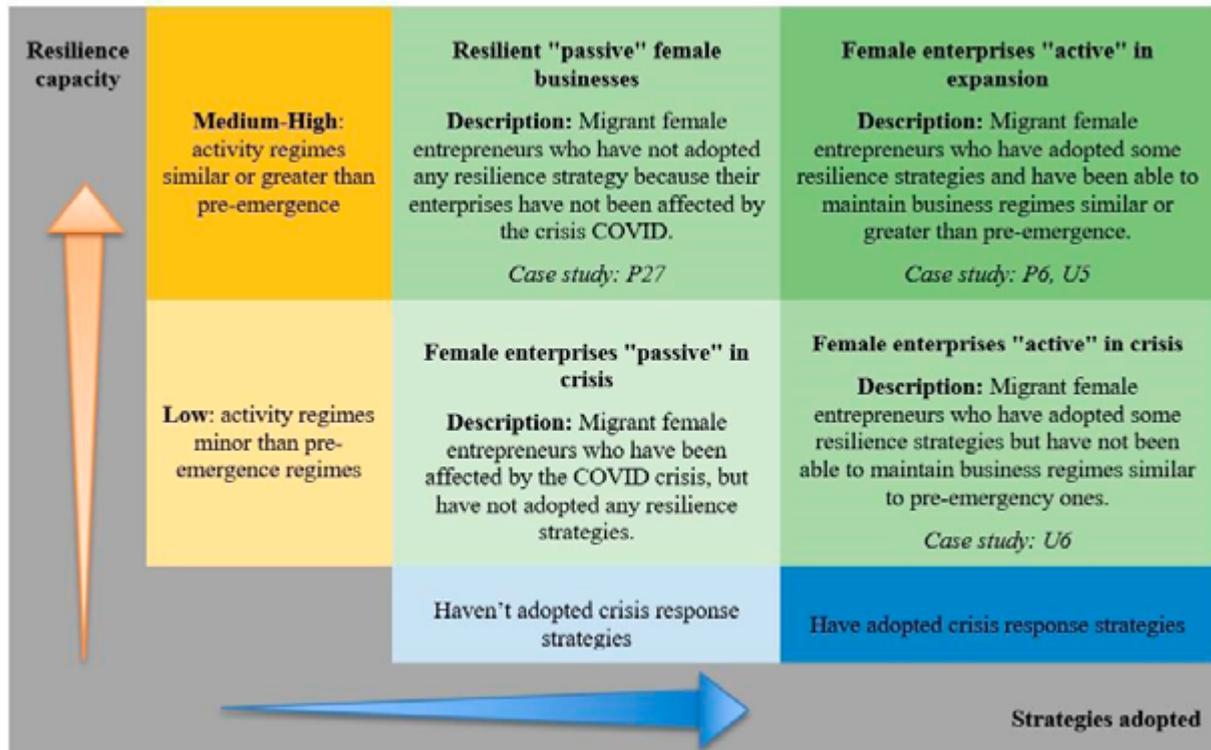
As we have learnt from the case studies examined in this paper, the pandemic surely had a considerable impact on the businesses performances and led the entrepreneurs to adopt, or at least to consider, new strategies to mitigate the effects of such a sudden change in global society.

Depending on a number of factors such as sector, economic “health” of the business before the pandemic, exposure to anti-pandemic restrictive measures, financial stability, resilience and recovery strategies adopted, last year's business evolution varied quite a lot case by case.

As shown in the figure 2 below, we delineated four entrepreneurial profiles, according to the resilience capacity in response to the pandemic:

- **Resilient “passive” female businesses:** migrant female entrepreneurs who have not adopted any resilience strategy because their enterprises have not been affected by the crisis COVID-19. Case study P27.
- **Female enterprises “active” in expansion:** migrant female entrepreneurs who have adopted some resilience strategies and have been able to maintain business regimes similar or greater than pre-emergence. Case study P6, U5.
- **Female enterprises “active” in crisis:** migrant female entrepreneurs who have adopted some resilience strategies but have not been able to maintain business regimes similar to pre-emergency ones. Case study U6.
- **Female enterprises “passive” in crisis:** migrant female entrepreneurs who have been affected by the COVID-19 crisis, but have not adopted any resilience strategies.

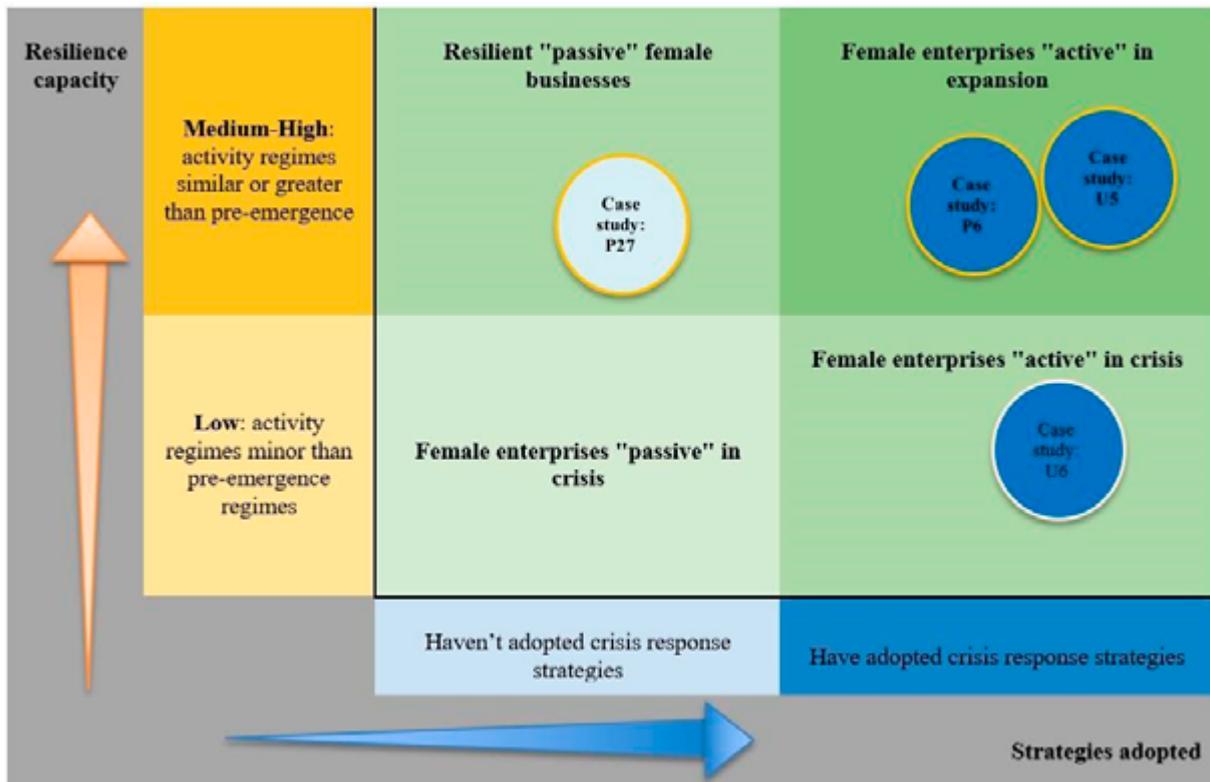
Figure 2. Profiles of migrant female entrepreneurs built according to the impact and the reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic



Source: Elaboration of the authors.

The following image shows how the enterprises that we have interviewed fit in the profile table. Apart from the P27 case study, the other entrepreneurs all adopted some resilience strategy, and two out of three got a considerable improvement.

**Figure 3. Migrant women entrepreneurs groups and cases, based on strategies adoption and resilience capacity in response to COVID-19 pandemic.**



Source: Elaboration of the authors.

## CONCLUSIONS

Retrieving the results emerged from the 2019's research cluster analysis, we had the chance to outline 4 different entrepreneurial patterns: *first generation entrepreneurs*, who decided to open a business in sectors more accessible to foreigners, such as food industry or commerce, usually directed to a general public; *female innovator entrepreneurs*, focused on high skills and quality, even at the expense of immediate earnings, but also achieving greater stability in employment; *traditional successful entrepreneurs*, managing to offer typical products or services, made by employing foreign workers, but still addressed to generalist customer base; *new generation of well-integrated entrepreneurs*, with a greater employment growth, knowing how to enhance the skills gained in the country of origin and able to make a competitive advantage out of their cultural openness.

The archetypes (described in Figure 2.) deriving from this year's in-depth qualitative interviews and taking into exam the resilience capacity and the strategies actively adopted, seem to match quite consistently to at least 3 out of the four "old" patterns described.

Namely, the cases P6 and U5, belonging in the matrix (Figure 3.) to the category "Female enterprises active in expansion", show deep differences among them, but they both share the proactive approach. In fact, even though in the cluster analysis the case P6 belongs to the "traditional successful entrepreneurs" pattern and the U5 to the "female innovator entrepreneurs" one, they share the attitude of taking the pandemic as an opportunity to innovate their business and adapt it to an evolving society, especially through digitalization strategies. Of course, such an attitude is "justified" also by the pandemic impact magnitude: their business carry out activities - tailor's shop and bureaucratic services - which were not (or just partially) affected by the restrictive measures. Differently, the other tailor's shop described (case P27), which belonged to the "first generation entrepreneurs", demonstrated to still

be resilient but did not actively adopt any strategy to adapt her business: she relied on the savings accumulated throughout the years and reduced her staff in order to keep up her enterprise.

A different matter is the case U6: even though she had been included in the “*female innovator entrepreneurs*” cluster and stated that she tried to adopt many different strategies to cope with the pandemic-related crisis, her resilience capacity was not enough to mitigate the massive impact of the economic shock on a sector as exposed as the tourism industry.

What emerges from this follow-up aimed at assessing the impact of the pandemic over an acquainted sample is that there is probably a line, embodied by the violence of the restrictive measures on some specific sectors, beyond which the entrepreneur will face severe difficulties no matter which strategy decide to adopt. On the other hand, deliberate choices can actually turn out to be game changing as we witnessed comparing the two tailor’s shop cases: even though the sector and the type of shop is the same, the choice to undertake (or not) some strategies gave different results.

It is still unclear how the entrepreneurial component of our society will evolve in the next future. What seems to come out from these qualitative data though, is that a proactive strategic attitude is tendentially more likely to give results rather than a passive one which, even if sided by a high degree of resilience, usually can just minimize the damage. The results of our research show that several FMEs in Rome were able to develop resilience strategies based on their creativity, professional expertise, digitization and community relations.

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## Crowdfunding in times of COVID-19

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### RESUMEN:

Este estudio se ha centrado en la plataforma *GoFundMe*, la cual es considerada como la que tiene un mayor volumen de campañas relacionadas con la COVID-19. *GoFundMe* es una plataforma que se encuadra dentro de la modalidad de crowdfunding de donación. El principal objetivo de este trabajo consiste en el análisis de las campañas de crowdfunding relacionadas con la COVID-19, que se han recopilado de manera manual de la plataforma de *GoFundMe*, con el propósito de llevar a cabo una descripción de las características de una muestra aleatoria de 118 proyectos. Mediante la utilización de diferentes técnicas del análisis estadístico de tipo descriptivo se analizan un conjunto de variables cuantitativas, como son la tipología del proyecto, importe recaudado, importe objetivo, y estadísticas sobre la recaudación de los fondos relativa al número de donantes, veces compartidos y seguidores, entre otras.

### ABSTRACT:

This study has focused on the *GoFundMe* platform, which is considered to have the highest volume of campaigns related to COVID-19. *GoFundMe* is a platform that falls within the donation crowdfunding modality. The main objective of this paper consists of the analysis of the crowdfunding campaigns related to COVID-19, which have been collected manually from the *GoFundMe* platform, in order to carry out a description of the characteristics of a sample random of 118 projects. Through the use of different techniques of descriptive statistical analysis, a set of quantitative variables are analyzed, such as the type of project, amount collected, target amount, and statistics on fundraising related to the number of donors, times shared and followers, among others.

### RÉSUMÉ :

Cette étude se concentre sur la plateforme *GoFundMe*, qui est considérée comme celle qui a le plus de campagnes liées à la COVID-19. *GoFundMe* est une plate-forme de financement participatif. Le principal objectif de ce travail est d'analyser les campagnes de financement participatif liées à la COVID-19, qui ont été compilées manuellement à partir de la plate-forme *GoFundMe*, en vue d'une description des caractéristiques d'un échantillon aléatoire de 118 projets. Différentes techniques d'analyse statistique descriptive permettent d'analyser un ensemble de variables quantitatives, telles que la typologie du projet, le montant collecté, le montant cible et les statistiques sur le nombre de donateurs collectés, fois partagés et adeptes, entre autres.

### RESUMO:

Este estudo foca-se na a plataforma *GoFundMe*, a qual é considerada a de maior volume de campanhas relacionadas à COVID-19. *GoFundMe* é uma plataforma que se enquadra na modalidade de crowdfunding de doação. O objetivo principal deste trabalho consiste na análise das campanhas de crowdfunding relacionadas com a COVID-19, recolhidas manualmente na plataforma *GoFundMe*, com o propósito de realizar a descrição das características de uma amostra aleatória de 118 projetos. Por meio da análise estatística descritiva são analisadas um conjunto de variáveis quantitativas, como a tipologia do projeto, valor arrecadado, valor objetivo e estatísticas sobre a arrecadação dos recursos em relação ao número de doantes, vezes compartilhado e seguidores, entre outras.

### PALABRAS CLAVE:

CROWDFUNDING,  
FUNDADORES, ECONOMÍA  
SOCIAL, COVID-19

### KEYWORDS:

CROWDFUNDING, FOUNDERS,  
SOCIAL ECONOMY,  
COVID-19.

### MOTS-CLÉS :

CROWDFUNDING,  
FONDATEURS, ECONOMIE  
SOCIALE, COVID-19.

### PALAVRAS-CHAVES:

CROWDFUNDING,  
FUNDADORES, ECONOMIA  
SOCIAL, COVID-19.



## INTRODUCCIÓN

A finales del primer trimestre del año 2020, la llegada vertiginosa de la pandemia de la COVID-19 empezó a avencinar una gran tormenta económica y social a nivel mundial, cuyos efectos, están ocupando un lugar importante en los debates públicos, y sobre todo en los trabajos de investigaciones académicas.

En tiempos difíciles, donde la pandemia, desencadena en una crisis sanitaria, económica y social sin precedentes, el instinto de las personas por ayudar a los demás de alguna manera, hizo que hubiera un aumento significativo de campañas benéficas (Farhoud *et al.*, 2021), en busca de una financiación colectiva ante unas consecuencias devastadoras e impredecibles que se estaba presentando de forma muy rápida.

El crowdfunding, por tanto, ha sido y es una importante herramienta de financiación (Rajwa *et al.*, 2020) y un método exitoso de recaudación de fondos, que juega un papel importante, para apoyar numerosas causas médicas y sociales, entre ellos, las relacionadas con la COVID-19 (Renko *et al.*, 2019), ya que, a medida que la emergencia sanitaria se extendía rápidamente por los países, surgieron muchas campañas de crowdfunding para solventar la situación (Merelli, 2020).

La plataforma en línea GoFundMe, objeto de nuestro estudio, es caracterizada por su fácil accesibilidad y cuenta con un gran número de proyectos, donde se puede observar un aumento paulatino y significativo de los proyectos relacionados con la COVID-19.

Tal y como afirma Farny *et al.* (2019), el apoyo de los emprendedores sociales, en tiempos de crisis, es una fuente esencial para cubrir la falta de apoyo gubernamental, necesarios para una recuperación social y económica de los agentes implicados, ya que han sido muchas las personas desfavorecidas que se han encontrado indefensas y sin medios para sobrellevar la delicada situación en la que se han vistos inmersas.

La pandemia de la COVID-19, ha demostrado que un gran número de empresas sociales han intentado adaptarse y sobrevivir, enfrentándose para ello, a los importantes desafíos que han venido provocados por una lucha constante y activa frente a problemas sociales causados por la pandemia.

Más allá de mitigar el efecto de la crisis provocada por la pandemia, es probable que el crowdfunding proporcione una señal temprana de las necesidades emergentes y el sentimiento social de las comunidades en grave peligro (Saleh *et al.*, 2021).

Tal y como afirma Cadogan (2021) el crowdfunding relacionado con el coronavirus ha sufrido un aumento exponencial importante corroborándose con la plataforma objeto de estudio como es GoFundMe, la cual ha recibido un alto número de solicitudes (Elmer *et al.*, 2020) y de donde se pueden extraer un gran número de proyectos de economía colaborativa con respecto a la COVID-19 a nivel mundial durante el brote de la pandemia.

La plataforma reseñada, empezó a tener un funcionamiento muy intenso y un uso desconocido hasta la fecha, en los primeros meses de la conocida crisis sanitaria (Ryssdal *et al.*, 2020).

## DESCRIPCIÓN DE LOS DATOS Y METODOLOGÍA

La información necesaria para realizar el estudio se ha obtenido a partir de una muestra aleatoria de 118 proyectos de crowdfunding relacionados con COVID-19 recopilados de la plataforma GoFundMe.

Como se muestra en la Tabla 1, las modalidades de proyectos de crowdfunding que se han creado con más frecuencia son los proyectos que pertenecen a la categoría “Médicas, enfermedades y salud” con el 48 % de proyectos, seguido de la categoría de “Accidentes y emergencias” con el 11 % de los mismos. Estos resultados son como se esperaban debido a que un gran porcentaje de las campañas de crowdfunding se han creado para solventar la difícil situación que ha provocado la emergencia sanitaria provocada por la COVID-19.

En lo que respecta al importe recaudado, las modalidades de proyectos que presentan unos mayores importes medios es la de “Comunidad y vecinos” con un importe medio recaudado superior a los cinco millones de euros, seguido por la categoría de “Accidentes y emergencias” con un valor medio cercano al millón de euros. En este sentido, cabe indicarse que el importe medio recaudado para el total de proyectos ha sido de aproximadamente los 532.000 euros.

Por otra parte, el mayor número medio de donantes se encuentran en la categoría de “Accidentes y emergencias” con un valor medio de 17.330 donantes por proyecto, seguidos por las categorías de “Comunidad de vecinos” y “Medioambiente” con unos valores medios de 9.437 y 6.800 donantes por proyecto, respectivamente. En cuanto al valor medio del número de donantes para el total de categorías seleccionadas ha sido de 4.365.

Por último, respecto a las variables cuantitativas número de veces que el proyecto es compartido mediante las redes sociales y número de seguidores de los proyectos, las categorías que presentan unos mayores valores medios coinciden con las categorías que presentaban un mayor número medio de donantes, la cuales son las categorías de “Accidentes y emergencias” (22.673 veces compartido y 17.283 seguidores por proyecto), “Comunidad de vecinos” (11.048 veces compartido y 9.473 seguidores por proyecto) y “Medioambiente” (8.500 veces compartido y 6.700 seguidores por proyecto). En este caso, el número medio de veces en el que el proyecto es compartido y el número medio de seguidores para el total de los 118 proyectos es de 5.601 y 4.325, respectivamente.

**Tabla 1. Características de los proyectos por categoría**

Tipo de proyecto	Nº	Importe medio recaudado (en euros)	Importe medio objetivo (en euros)	Nº medio de Donantes	Nº medio de veces compartido	Nº medio de seguidores
Accidentes y emergencias	13	1.009.147	1.773.552	17.330	22.673	17.283
Alquiler, comida y facturas mensuales	4	6.969	34.894	142	344	141
Animales y mascotas	1	25.000	25.000	903	862	898
Artes creativas, música y cine	3	56.914	118.689	776	1.722	773
Bebés, niños y familias	3	112.769	115.508	946	1.979	947
Celebraciones y eventos	1	22.811	25.134	237	729	234
Comunidad y vecinos	8	5.230.643	5.456.520	9.437	11.048	9.473
Deportes, equipos y clubes	1	4.457	5.865	76	438	76
Funerales y recordatorios	7	12.600	11.250	221	779	221
Médicas, enfermedades y salud	57	91.751	138.029	3.019	3.591	2.945
Medioambiente	1	550.650	628.352	6.800	8.500	6.700
Negocios y emprendedores	6	29.041	55.073	531	1.447	546
ONGs y organizaciones benéficas	3	50.993	83.453	1.062	1.295	986
Otras	6	75.688	165.795	1.283	4.551	1.283
Sueños, esperanzas y deseos	1	30.429	83.780	1.900	195	1.900
Voluntariado y servicios	3	177.162	200.894	3.653	1.530	3.687

**Fuente:** Elaboración propia a partir de los datos recopilados de la plataforma GoFundMe

Respecto a los proyectos que han resultado exitosos porque han conseguido el importe objetivo, cabe indicarse que del total de los 118 proyectos analizados únicamente el 19,49 % de los mismos consiguió el importe objetivo establecido a la hora de su creación. No obstante, si el análisis se lleva a cabo por categoría de proyectos se observa que los mayores porcentajes de éxito se encuentran en las categorías de “Alquiler, comida y facturas mensuales”, “Funerales y recordatorios”, “Comunidad de vecinos” y “Artes creativas, música y cine” con el 50 %, 42,86 %, 37,5 % y 33,33 %, respectivamente.

## Conclusiones y futuras líneas de investigación

El crowdfunding de proyectos socialmente comprometidos, es y será una pieza importante de un puzzle que nos ayudará a conseguir una estrategia más sostenible y llevadera en el futuro post pandémico que nos espera.

En esta fuente de financiación alternativa, tendrán cabida proyectos relacionados con la COVID-19 de todas las categorías, tal y como se puede apreciar en la estadística anteriormente expuesta.

Por ello, es necesario seguir avanzando en las variables que pueden influir a la hora de que una campaña sea exitosa o no. Aunque, se trata de un tema ampliamente estudiado en la literatura previa, es fundamental aplicar ese tipo de estudios a proyectos específicamente relacionados con la COVID-19 con objeto de averiguar si las variables que han sido previamente consideradas como las que influyen en el éxito también siguen siéndolo en este tipo de proyectos. En este sentido, el estudio ampliará el análisis estadístico con métodos econométricos en el que se emplearán variables cuantitativas y cualitativas, con objeto de establecer relaciones significativas entre las mismas.

La pandemia de la COVID-19, junto a la incertidumbre, la interrupción y el surgimiento de nuevas y urgentes necesidades está obligando a los investigadores de emprendimiento social a mirar más allá de los conflictos y tensiones organizacionales, y considerar el “panorama general” que incluye esfuerzos para abordar los problemas sociales globales (Bacq, S., Lumpkin, 2020).

A diferencia de la mayoría de los desastres, los cuales, generalmente tienen una fase aguda de destrucción y luego una de recuperación, los impactos de la pandemia sobre la economía y salud serán duraderos, y esto se refleja en el prolongado crecimiento de campañas de crowdfunding (Igraa *et al.*, 2021).

Además, se puede afirmar, tal y como se desprende de los resultados obtenidos, el compromiso de la sociedad ante la situación vivida en estas fechas lo que se traduce en un refuerzo de las aportaciones dedicadas a proyectos relacionados con accidentes y emergencias y de comunidad y vecinos.

Esto, pone de manifiesto la ola de solidaridad que se ha producido a raíz de la pandemia provocada por la crisis sanitaria de la COVID-19.

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# Empoderamiento de la mujer y habilidades gerenciales en el logro de la responsabilidad social empresarial de las empresas de artesanías de la región Puno – Perú



## Empowerment of women and managerial skills in achieving corporate social responsibility in handicraft companies from the Puno region – Peru

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### RESUMEN:

El objetivo de la investigación es determinar la incidencia del empoderamiento de la mujer y sus habilidades gerenciales en la responsabilidad social empresarial de las empresas de artesanías de la región Puno, periodo 2019. El estudio es cuantitativo; con alcance descriptivo, correlacional-explicativo y diseño no experimental-transeccional. La muestra se conformó por 160 mujeres, se aplicó una encuesta procesada en el programa SPSS 22.0 y hoja electrónica Excel. Los resultados muestran que el nivel de empoderamiento de la mujer que pertenece a las empresas de artesanías de la región Puno obtuvo una puntuación de 106.11. Las habilidades conceptuales, grupales, personales y técnicas son las que predominan en las mujeres dentro de las habilidades gerenciales y el impulso al cumplimiento de indicadores de responsabilidad social en las empresas de artesanía de la Región Puno se ha dado en dimensiones como comunidad, consumidores-clientes y medio ambiente. Se concluye que con un coeficiente de determinación obtenido por el modelo que es  $R^2 = 0.383$ , significa que el 38,3 % de la variabilidad de la responsabilidad social empresarial de las empresas, queda explicada por el empoderamiento de la mujer y sus habilidades gerenciales.

### ABSTRACT:

The objective of the research is to determine the incidence of the empowerment of women and their managerial skills in the corporate social responsibility of handicraft companies in the Puno region, period 2019. The study is quantitative; with descriptive, correlational-explanatory scope and non-experimental-transectional design. The sample was made up of 160 women, a survey processed in the SPSS 22.0 program and an Excel electronic sheet were applied. The results show that the level of empowerment of women belonging to handicraft companies in the Puno region obtained a score of 106.11. Conceptual, group, personal and technical skills are those that predominate in women within managerial skills and the promotion of compliance with indicators of social responsibility in handicraft companies in the Puno Region has been given in dimensions such as community, consumers- customers and environment. It is concluded that with a determination coefficient obtained by the model that is  $R^2 = 0.383$ , it means that 38.3% of the variability of corporate social responsibility of companies is explained by the empowerment of women and their managerial skills.

### PALABRAS CLAVE:

EMPODERAMIENTO,  
EMPODERAMIENTO DE  
LA MUJER, HABILIDADES  
GERENCIALES,  
RESPONSABILIDAD SOCIAL  
EMPRESARIAL Y ARTESANÍA.

### KEY WORDS:

EMPOWERMENT,  
EMPOWERMENT OF  
WOMEN, MANAGEMENT  
SKILLS, CORPORATE  
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY  
AND CRAFTSMANSHIP.





## RÉSUMÉ

L'objectif de la recherche est de déterminer l'incidence de l'autonomisation des femmes et de leurs compétences en gestion sur la responsabilité sociale des entreprises artisanales de la région Puno, période 2019. L'étude est quantitative ; avec portée descriptive, corrélation-explicative et conception non expérimentale-transactionnelle. L'échantillon a été constitué par 160 femmes, une enquête traitée dans le programme SPSS 22.0 et feuille électronique Excel. Les résultats montrent que le niveau d'autonomisation des femmes appartenant aux entreprises artisanales de la région de Puno a atteint 106,11. Les compétences conceptuelles, de groupes, personnels et techniques sont celles qui prédominent chez les femmes dans les compétences managériales et la promotion du respect des indicateurs de responsabilité sociale dans les entreprises artisanales de la Région Puno a été donnée en tant que communauté, consommateurs-clients et environnement. Il est conclu qu'avec un coefficient de détermination obtenu par le modèle qui est  $R^2 = 0,383$ , cela signifie que 38,3 % de la variabilité de la responsabilité sociale des entreprises s'explique par l'autonomisation des femmes et leurs compétences en matière de gestion.

### MOTS-CLÉS:

AUTONOMISATION DE LA FEMME, COMPÉTENCES MANAGÉRIALES, RESPONSABILITÉ SOCIALE DES ENTREPRISES, ARTISANAT.

## RESUMO:

O objetivo da investigação é determinar a incidência do empoderamento das mulheres e de suas competências gerenciais na responsabilidade social empresarial de empresas de artesanato na região de Puno, período 2019. O estudo é quantitativo; com alcance descritivo, correlacional-explicativo e desenho não-experimental-transversal. A amostra foi composta por 160 mulheres, aplicou-se uma enquete processada no programa SPSS 22.0 e aplicação de folha eletrônica Excel. Os resultados mostram que o nível de empoderamento das mulheres pertencentes às empresas de artesanato da região de Puno obteve uma pontuação de 106,11. As competências conceptuais, grupais, pessoais e técnicas são as que predominam nas mulheres dentro das competências empresariais e o impulso ao cumprimento dos indicadores de responsabilidade social nas empresas de artesanato da Região de Puno tem se dado em dimensões como comunidade, consumidores-clients e meio ambiente. Conclui-se que com um coeficiente de determinação obtido pelo modelo que é  $R^2 = 0,383$ , significa que 38,3% da variabilidade da responsabilidade social empresarial das empresas é explicada pelo empoderamento das mulheres e suas competências gerenciais.

### PALAVRAS-CHAVE:

EMPODERAMENTO, EMPODERAMENTO DA MULHER, HABILIDADES GERENCIAIS, RESPONSABILIDADE SOCIAL EMPRESARIAL E ARTESANATO.



## INTRODUCCIÓN

El 25 de septiembre de 2015, los líderes mundiales adoptaron un conjunto de objetivos globales para erradicar la pobreza, proteger el planeta y asegurar la prosperidad para todos como parte de una nueva agenda de desarrollo sostenible. Gamboa-Bernal (2015) y la Organización Internacional del Trabajo (2017) resaltan que dentro de los 17 objetivos esta la igualdad de género, no solo como un derecho humano fundamental, sino la base necesaria para conseguir un mundo pacífico, próspero y sostenible. En ese contexto Caicedo-Muñoz y Solarte-Pazos (2015) refiere al empoderamiento de la mujer, como un proceso interdependiente, que emerge como producto de la acción de ellas sobre los problemas sociales y públicos de su comunidad. Complementa Vargas-Winstanley, Ruiz-Bravo y Clausen-Lizárraga (2018), el empoderamiento femenino se define como la capacidad de tomar decisiones y poder ejecutarlas, Hoinle-Ruthfuss y Gotto (2013) teniendo empleo, autonomía económica y de decisión frente al esposo, sobre sí mismas, su cuerpo y su familia; tener una autoestima alta y tomar la iniciativa en su comunidad y en su familia. Hernández-Sánchez y García (2008), propone siete dimensiones del empoderamiento, i) participación, ii) temeridad, iii) relaciones externas o sociales, iv) independencia, v) igualdad, vi) la satisfacción social e vii) integridad-seguridad. La CEPAL (2017) y el BID (2015) afirma que las mujeres emprendedoras tienen el potencial de promover el crecimiento económico a través de los nuevos empleos e ingresos que generan con sus micro, pequeños y medianos emprendimientos.

Empero, González y Ley (2019) afirma que dirigir un negocio o empresa, no se trata solo de hacer bien las cosas, sino además hacer lo correcto y con calidad, Moreno-Baquedano y Wong (2018) esto significa que no solo debe haber buenos gerentes, también líderes competentes y aptos en cualquier ámbito laboral. Ascón-Villa (2018) plantea que una persona puede llegar a ser un gerente eficaz, realmente justo y organizado, pero sin la habilidad para ser un líder y motivador de sus empleados, otras personas pueden ser líderes altamente eficaces y con grandes habilidades para generar entusiasmo, pero no tiene la suficiente habilidad técnica. Entonces Leiva y Espejel (2017) refiere que las habilidades gerenciales no solo se limitan a un campo cognitivo, más bien son integrales, porque también requieren pasión y constancia.

Apuntando a la integralidad García-Payares, Boom-Carcamo y Molina (2017) propone una clasificación donde considera que las habilidades conceptuales, Aparicio-Valdez y Medina (2015) a las habilidades grupales. Naranjo-Arango (2015) a las habilidades personales y García-Payares, Boom-Carcamo y Molina (2017) así como, González y Ley (2019) agregan a las habilidades técnicas. García-Solarte, García-Pérez de Lema y Madrid (2018) complementan, que estas habilidades, las mujeres poseen en forma natural, pues se encuentra científicamente probado que el hemisferio derecho (emociones) y el hemisferio izquierdo (conocimientos) del cerebro de una mujer se encuentran plenamente conectados, factor a favor, pues esta conexión le permite ser más eficiente a la hora del manejo de recursos y formulación de estrategias.

Hay que destacar que las estrategias hoy en día se traducen en beneficios para las empresas y la responsabilidad social, Herrera-Madueño, Larrán-Jorge y Martínez (2013) es “una expresión que ha entrado con fuerza en los últimos años en la agenda económica y empresarial y, posteriormente, también en la agenda política y social” para favorecer a todas las partes interesadas y no solo a los accionistas. Rojas-Terrazas, Niño-Ramos y Martínez (2017) señalan que el desarrollo de la responsabilidad social empresarial como estrategia, ha permitido hoy en día a la empresa ser más competitiva logrando y demostrando entre otras crear confianza para los consumidores, dado que sus prácticas permiten satisfacer sus necesidades y van dirigidas al bien común. Instituto Ethos (2013), Franco (2006) y IARSE (2008) dimensionan a la responsabilidad social empresarial en: valores y transparencia, público interno, medio ambiente, proveedores, clientes, comunidad y gobierno y sociedad.

En el Perú, en especial en la Región Puno existe una cultura tradicional en artesanía, reflejada en hermosas manifestaciones que se muestran a través de los productos pertenecientes a diversas líneas. Ríos (2019) las prendas poseen, inevitablemente, una carga de identidad referida al grupo social a partir del empleo de determinadas técnicas, diseños y colores. Burns (2015) la carga afectiva está relacionada más bien con el recuerdo del artífice, como obsequio o herencia. Forstner (2013) por lo general, es la abuela o la madre tejedoras quienes regalan el arte y secretos del tejido a las nietas e hijas predilectas, la Dirección General de Artesanía del Ministerio de Comercio Exterior y Turismo afirma que, como actividad productiva, posee características definidas, desarrollándose en forma espontánea y empírica y además resalta que las empresas dedicadas al rubro proporcionan un sustento económico a un gran número de personas y hace una enorme contribución a las exportaciones y los ingresos de divisas del Perú.

En este orden de ideas, la investigación tiene como objetivos específicos: i) determinar el nivel de empoderamiento de la mujer en las empresas de artesanías de la Región Puno, ii) identificar las habilidades gerenciales de la mujer que predominan en las empresas de artesanías de la Región Puno, iii) analizar el cumplimiento de los indicadores de responsabilidad social empresarial en las empresas de artesanías de la Región Puno. Los mismos que han permitido lograr el objetivo general: determinar la incidencia del empoderamiento de la mujer y sus habilidades gerenciales en la responsabilidad social empresarial de las empresas de artesanías de la región Puno.

## MÉTODOS

**Ambiente o Lugar de estudio.** La investigación se ubica en el departamento de Puno, ubicado al extremo sur este del Perú, políticamente dividido en trece provincias, cuya distribución geográfica permite establecer la zona sur y zona norte. **El periodo de estudio** comprende los meses de abril y diciembre del año 2019.

**Descripción de métodos.** La investigación tiene un enfoque cuantitativo; de alcance descriptivo, correlacional-explicativo y diseño de investigación no experimental. En cuanto a la selección de instrumentos para la **variable empoderamiento de la mujer** se ha utilizado el instrumento validado por Hernandez-Sanchez y Garcia (2008) que consta de 34 ítems medidos en una escala de Likert donde 1= totalmente en desacuerdo; 2= desacuerdo; 3= ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo; 4= acuerdo y 5= totalmente de acuerdo. Para la **variable habilidades gerenciales** se ha utilizado un instrumento que consta de 29 ítems medidos en una escala de Likert donde 1= nunca; 2= casi nunca; 3= a veces; 4= casi siempre y 5= siempre; y finalmente para la **variable responsabilidad social empresarial** se ha utilizado un instrumento validado por el Instituto Argentino de Responsabilidad Social Empresarial, que consta de 37 ítems, medidos en una escala de Likert donde 1= nunca; 2= casi nunca; 3= a veces; 4= casi siempre y 5= siempre. Lo anterior aplicado a una muestra probabilística estratificada que consta de 160 mujeres que pertenecen a las empresas de artesanías de la región Puno, distribuidas en las provincias de Puno, Chucuito, Lampa y Melgar (zona sur y norte).

**Prueba estadística,** para el procesamiento de datos se utilizó el programa SPSS y la hoja de cálculo Microsoft Excel, en las que se establecieron las medidas de tendencia central y las correlaciones respectivas para la regresión lineal múltiple para el cumplimiento de los objetivos.

## RESULTADOS

### Nivel de empoderamiento de la mujer de las empresas de artesanías de la Región Puno

Para el logro de este objetivo se ha tomado como referencia la tabla 1, del instrumento utilizado, la misma que categoriza el nivel de empoderamiento según el puntaje obtenido en un rango menor de 89, de 90 a 104 y mayor de 105. La suma de las dimensiones, participación (27.51), temeridad (13.16), influencias externas (16.70), independencia (10.88), igualdad (11.75), satisfacción social (13.93), seguridad (14.00), ha dado como resultado final una puntuación de 106.11 para la mujer de las empresas de artesanía de la región Puno, resultado que permite inferir que el nivel de empoderamiento de éstas es alto (tabla 2) (figura 1).

**Tabla 1. Empoderamiento según el puntaje obtenido**

Rango	Categoría
Mayor de 105	Empoderamiento alto
De 90 a 104	Empoderamiento medio
Menor de 89	Empoderamiento bajo

Fuente: (Hernandez Sanchez y Garcia Falconi 2008).

**Tabla 2. Puntaje para la variable empoderamiento de la mujer**

Dimensión	Puntaje
Participación	25.71
Temeridad	13.16
Influencias externas	16.70
Independencia	10.88
Igualdad	11.75
Satisfacción social	13.93
Seguridad	14.00
Puntaje Total	106.11

Fuente: Datos procesados.

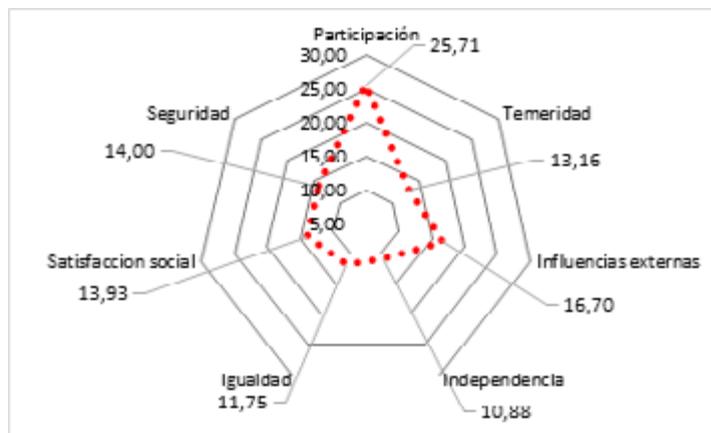


Figura 1. Nivel de empoderamiento de la mujer que pertenece a las empresas de artesanías de la región Puno

Se ha podido evidenciar el nivel alto de empoderamiento de la mujer que pertenece a las empresas de artesanía de la región Puno, resultado satisfactorio y concordante con lo afirmado por Caicedo & Solarte (2015), quien alude al empoderamiento de la mujer, como un proceso interdependiente, complementando a lo anterior Vargas *et al.*, (2018) y Hoinle *et al.*, (2013) proceso donde la mujer asume la capacidad de tomar decisiones y poder ejecutarlas, autonomía económica y de decisión frente al esposo, sobre sí mismas, su cuerpo y su familia. Siendo más específicos y tomando en cuenta los resultados por dimensiones de esta variable, se ha podido evidenciar que son mujeres líderes, activas y participativas; tienden a eliminar la temeridad y dependencia de otras personas, viene desarrollando un sentido de igualdad con respecto al varón, lo que le permite competir y luchar por mejores posiciones en cualquier ámbito. Aspectos que concuerdan con la óptica de Hernández-Sánchez y García (2008).

## Habilidades gerenciales que predominan en la mujer de las empresas de artesanías de la región Puno.

Para identificar éstas, se ha medido en una escala del 1 al 5 (donde 1= nunca; 2= casi nunca; 3= a veces; 4= casi siempre y 5= siempre), los indicadores de las cuatro dimensiones y el promedio obtenido en el total de las encuestadas es: habilidades conceptuales (3.10), grupales (3.60), personales (3.00) y técnicas (3.70); resultado que permite inferir que las habilidades grupales y técnicas son aquellas que predominan en la mujer que pertenece a las empresas de artesanía (figura2).

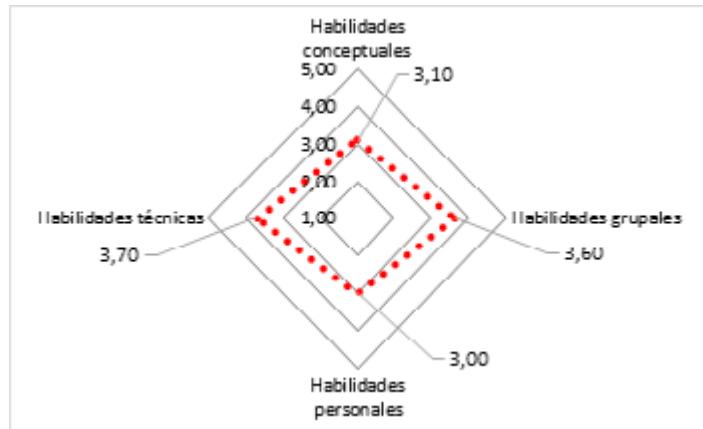


Figura 2. Habilidades gerenciales de la mujer que pertenece a las empresas de artesanías de la Región Puno

Los resultados evidencian que la mujer que pertenece a la empresa de artesanías de la región Puno ha desarrollado habilidades grupales, es decir identifican el potencial de sus colaboradoras y contribuyen a su desarrollo; dirigen, promueven y motivan equipos de trabajo para alcanzar un alto desempeño, delegando poder a sus colaboradoras y generan adecuadas relaciones públicas con grupos diversos y complejos, internos y/o externos a la organización, escenario concordante con lo afirmado por Moreno-Baquedano y Wong (2018) que afirman que no solo debe haber buenos gerentes, también líderes competentes y aptos en cualquier ámbito laboral. Por otro lado vemos que predominan las habilidades técnicas, es decir ellas tienen conocimiento del negocio y del oficio y conocen del empleo de tecnologías; al respecto Forstner (2013) afirmaba que por lo general, es la abuela o la madre tejedoras quienes regalan el arte y secretos del tejido a las nietas e hijas predilectas, así también tienen adecuada comunicación escrita y oral y establece los procesos de su arte; García-Solarte, García - Pérez de Lema y Madrid (2018) complementan, que estas habilidades, las mujeres poseen en forma natural, pues se encuentra científicamente probado que el hemisferio derecho (emociones) y el hemisferio izquierdo (conocimientos) del cerebro de una mujer se encuentran plenamente conectados.

## Cumplimiento de los indicadores de responsabilidad social empresarial en las empresas de artesanías de la Región Puno

Estos indicadores han sido medidos en una escala del 1 al 5 (1= nunca; 2= casi nunca; 3= a veces; 4= casi siempre y 5= siempre), de las siete dimensiones que propone el instrumento; el promedio obtenido en el total de las encuestadas es: valores y transparencia (1.95), público interno (0.88), medio ambiente (3.44), proveedores (1.34), clientes (2.70), comunidad (2.45) y gobierno y sociedad (1.63); resultado que permite inferir que los indicadores de las dimensiones comunidad, consumidores-clientes y medio ambiente son aquellos donde estas empresas vienen poniendo énfasis en su cumplimiento (figura 3).

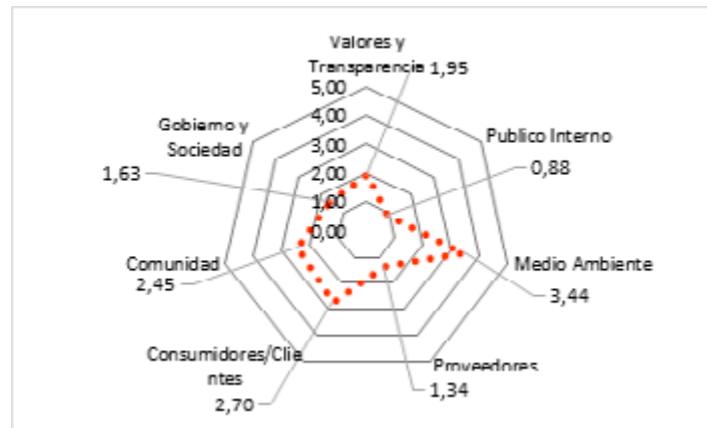


Figura 3. Cumplimiento de los indicadores de responsabilidad social empresarial de la mujer que pertenece a las empresas de artesanías de la región Puno.

En relación a la responsabilidad social empresarial se ha podido evidenciar el cumplimiento de un mayor número de indicadores en las dimensiones como comunidad, consumidores-clientes y medio ambiente, en las empresas de artesanías de la Región Puno, al respecto Rojas *et al.*, (2017) señala que la RSE se refiere como un proceso de gestión el satisfacer las expectativas de sus diferentes grupos de interés o “stakeholders” (empleados, clientes, socios, accionistas, proveedores comunidad y medio ambiente) consideradas dimensiones Instituto Ethos (2013), Franco (2006) y IARSE (2008). Entonces se puede inferir que para las empresas de artesanías de la región Puno todavía representa una oportunidad, fortalecer el cumplimiento de indicadores de las demás dimensiones como son: valores y transparencia, público interno, proveedores, gobierno y sociedad.

## Incidencia del empoderamiento de la mujer y sus habilidades gerenciales en la responsabilidad social empresarial de las empresas de artesanías de la Región Puno.

Para determinar la incidencia de las variables empoderamiento de la mujer ( $X_1$ ) y habilidades gerenciales ( $X_2$ ) sobre la responsabilidad social empresarial ( $Y$ ) se ha calculado el coeficiente de determinación mostrado (tabla 3)  $R^2 = 0.383$  (R-cuadrado, en resultados de regresión), nos indica que la variación del empoderamiento de la mujer y sus habilidades gerenciales tienen incidencia significativa en la Responsabilidad Social Empresarial, en un 38,3 %, se debe a las variaciones del empoderamiento de la mujer y sus habilidades gerenciales, por lo que el modelo de regresión de esta investigación es consistente. Teniendo en cuenta los resultados de la relevancia global obtenida la ecuación representativa del modelo será:

$$RSE = 30,039 + 0,180 * HG + 0,383 * EM$$

**Tabla 3. Resumen del modelo**

Modelo	R	R cuadrado	R cuadrado ajustado	Error estándar de la estimación
1	,619a	,383	,375	8,455

a. Predictores: (Constante), EM HG

**Tabla 4. Análisis de varianzas ajustado al modelo ANOVA**

Modelo		Suma de cuadrados	gl	Media cuadrática	F	Sig.
1	Regresión	6953,305	2	3476,653	48,635	,000b
	Residuo	11223,070	157	71,485		
	Total	18176,375	159			

a. Variable dependiente: RSE  
b. Predictores: (Constante), EM HG

**Tabla 5. Coeficientes de regresión**

Modelo	Coeficientes no estandarizados		Coeficientes estandarizados	t	Sig.	
	B	Error estándar	Beta			
1	(Constante)	30,039	6,543		4,591	,000
	HG	,180	,044	,269	4,123	,000
	EM	,393	,053	,486	7,442	,000

a. Variable dependiente: RSE

Finalmente con respecto al objetivo general de la investigación la validación del modelo recoge las vinculaciones de manera empírica y fiable de las dimensiones de la variable empoderamiento y habilidades gerenciales con la responsabilidad social empresarial de las empresas de artesanías de la región Puno, esta vinculación queda explicada mediante el coeficiente de determinación obtenido por el modelo que es  $R^2 = 0.383$ , lo que significa que el 38,3% de la variabilidad de la responsabilidad social empresarial de las empresas, queda explicada por el empoderamiento de la mujer y sus habilidades gerenciales de las mujeres que las conforman. Teniendo en cuenta la Prueba de relevancia global, en esta investigación se pone de manifiesto la multidimensionalidad de la responsabilidad social empresarial a través de un nivel de empoderamiento de la mujer ( $X_1$ ) y el desarrollo de las habilidades gerenciales ( $X_2$ ) y su vinculación e incidencia con la responsabilidad social empresarial (Y) en las empresas de artesanías de la Región Puno.

## CONCLUSIÓN

El nivel de empoderamiento de la mujer que pertenece a las empresas de artesanías de la Región Puno es alto, explicado por la suma de los promedios obtenidos en cada una de las dimensiones de la variable, con una puntuación de 106.11. Las habilidades gerenciales de la mujer que predominan en las empresas de artesanías de la Región Puno son habilidades conceptuales, grupales, personales y técnicas. En relación con el cumplimiento de los indicadores de responsabilidad social empresarial, las empresas de artesanía de la Región Puno vienen impulsando el cumplimiento de estos, sobre todo en aquellos que pertenecen a las dimensiones comunidad, consumidores-clientes y medio ambiente. Finalmente, con respecto al objetivo general de la investigación se concluye que en base a el coeficiente de determinación obtenido por el modelo que es  $R^2 = 0.383$ , significa que el 38,3% de la variabilidad de la responsabilidad social empresarial de las empresas, queda explicada por el empoderamiento de la mujer y sus habilidades gerenciales de las mujeres que las conforman.

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## Linking the social economy and green growth in Costa Rica under a multiple case study

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### RESUMEN

Costa Rica es líder en temas ambientales y posee una economía social consolidada. La economía social y el crecimiento verde pueden ser una combinación viable para lograr la sostenibilidad. Esta investigación busca conocer, por medio de un estudio de casos múltiples con cuatro cooperativas, una asociación solidarista y una caja de ahorro, si las acciones verdes emprendidas y los beneficios sostenibles obtenidos han generado impactos positivos en estas organizaciones; indaga si estos procesos fueron financiados mediante herramientas financieras verdes. Los resultados obtenidos demostraron que sí hay una vinculación del crecimiento verde con los casos estudiados, aunque se detectó que hay aspectos por mejorar, como la protección de la biodiversidad. Además, se perciben beneficios por las acciones verdes realizadas, pero se observa que hay un limitado uso de herramientas financieras verdes, lo cual implica que se podría potenciar el crecimiento verde si se implementaran.

### ABSTRACT

Costa Rica is a leader in environmental topics and has a consolidated social economy. The social economy and green growth can be a viable combination to reach sustainability. This research seeks to know, through a study of multiple cases with four cooperatives, one solidarity association and a savings bank, if the undertaken green actions and the sustainable benefits that were obtained have promoted positive impacts on these organizations; inquires if these processes were financed through green financial tools. The obtained results showed that there is a link between green growth and the cases studied, although it was detected that there are aspects to be improved, such as the protection of biodiversity. In addition, benefits are perceived for the green actions carried out, but it is observed that there is a limited use of green financial tools, which implies that green growth could be enhanced if they were implemented.

### RESUME

Le Costa Rica est leader en matière environnementale et possède une économie sociale consolidée. L'économie sociale et la croissance verte constituent une combinaison viable pour parvenir à la durabilité. Cette recherche vise à connaître, au moyen d'une étude de cas multiples avec quatre coopératives, une association solidariste et une caisse d'épargne, si les actions vertes mises en place et les bénéfices durables obtenus ont produit des impacts positifs sur ces organisations; demande si ces processus ont été financés à travers d'outils financiers verts. Les résultats obtenus montrent qu'il existe un lien de croissance verte et les cas étudiés, même si on remarque qu'il y a des domaines à améliorer comme la protection de la biodiversité. En outre, des avantages sont perçus grâce aux actions vertes réalisées, mais on constate que l'utilisation des outils financiers verts est limitée, ce qui signifie que la croissance verte pourrait être renforcée s'ils étaient mis en œuvre.

### RESUMO

A Costa Rica é líder em questões ambientais e possui uma economia social consolidada. A economia social e o crescimento verde podem ser uma combinação viável para atingir a sustentabilidade. Esta investigação busca conhecer, por meio de um estudo de casos múltiplos com quatro cooperativas, uma associação solidária e uma caixa de poupança, se as ações verdes empreendidas e os benefícios sustentáveis obtidos geraram impactos positivos nessas organizações; indaga se esses processos foram financiados por meio de ferramentas financeiras verdes. Os resultados obtidos demonstraram que existe uma ligação entre o crescimento verde e os casos estudados, embora tenha sido detectado que existem aspectos a melhorar, como a proteção da biodiversidade. Além disso, são percebidos benefícios pelas ações verdes realizadas, mas observa-se que há um uso limitado de ferramentas financeiras verdes, demonstrando que o crescimento verde poderia ser potencializado se fossem implementadas.

### PALABRAS CLAVE:

SOSTENIBILIDAD, COOPERATIVAS, SOLIDARISMO, BANCA ÉTICA, CAMBIO CLIMÁTICO, RECURSOS ECOSISTÉMICOS, FONDOS FINANCIEROS VERDES.

### KEY WORDS:

SUSTAINABILITY, COOPERATIVES, SOLIDARISM, ETHICS BANKING, GLOBAL WARMING, ECOSYSTEMIC RESOURCES, FINANCIAL GREEN FUNDS.

### MOTS CLES :

DURABILITE, COOPERATIVES, SOLIDARISME, BANQUE ETIQUE, CHANGEMENT CLIMATIQUE, RESSOURCES ECOSYSTEMIQUES, FONDS FINANCIERS VERTS.

### PALAVRAS-CHAVE:

SUSTENTABILIDADE, COOPERATIVAS, SOLIDARISMO, BANCO ÉTICO, MUDANÇAS CLIMÁTICAS, RECURSOS DO ECOSISTEMA, FUNDOS FINANCEIROS VERDES

## INTRODUCCIÓN

Los modelos de asociación vinculados con la economía social (ES) están unidos a la economía costarricense desde mediados del siglo XX. En este contexto se observa la aparición de la primera cooperativa en Costa Rica llamada CoopeVictoria R.L., el 12 de octubre de 1943 (CoopeVictoria, 2019). También, Costa Rica, de la mano de Alberto Martén, en 1947 introdujo la propuesta vinculada a la ES llamada solidarismo, donde trabajadores y patrones constituían una organización con los aportes de ambos grupos para lograr una mejor estabilidad financiera de los asociados (CONASOL, 2021). Esto, en el modelo de cajas de ahorro, ocurrió con la creación de la Junta de Ahorro y Préstamo de la Universidad de Costa Rica (JUNTA UCR) en 1940. Consistía en una caja de ahorro donde los trabajadores realizaban un aporte obligatorio y este era compensado con un aporte patronal, mientras hubiese relación laboral (Contreras, 2012). Se puede deducir que la ES tuvo un proceso dinámico en la década de los años cuarenta, vinculada con las reformas sociales de la época en Costa Rica. Todo este proceso potenció la generación de nuevas organizaciones vinculadas a la ES (Quesada, 2008).

La ES ha impulsado el crecimiento económico de Costa Rica y aborda sectores como el agrícola, servicios financieros, energéticos y otros, los cuales permiten dar dinamismo en las regiones del país donde esta se ha logrado consolidar. Los retos que dichas organizaciones afrontan en el nuevo milenio involucran los efectos del cambio climático (CC) y cómo realizar acciones que potencien un crecimiento sostenible. En la actualidad, Costa Rica ha planteado diversas acciones para afrontar el CC como, por ejemplo, reducir las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero, protección de la biodiversidad, inducir la bioeconomía y potenciar el crecimiento verde desde finales del siglo XX y durante este nuevo milenio. Algunas de las acciones concretadas son:

- b) Programa de pagos por servicios ambientales gestado por el Fondo Nacional de Financiamiento Forestal (Fonafifo, 2021).
- c) Declaración para la carbono neutralidad (Dobles, 2021).
- d) Programa para descarbonización (Minae, 2018).
- e) Programa para impulsar la bioeconomía (Micitt, 2020).

El caso de los pagos por servicios ambientales en Costa Rica tiene más de 20 años de existencia. Estos han sido tomados como un caso de éxito internacional por su impacto en la recuperación y protección de áreas de bosque y estímulos para la reforestación, donde han obtenido fondos del Banco Mundial y la fijación de impuestos a los combustibles (Sánchez y Navarrete, 2017). Con respecto a la carbono neutralidad declarada en la administración del presidente Oscar Arias en 2006, los resultados y propuestas están sujetos a debate en los alcances que ha tenido (Baltodano, 2008), pero no deja de ser un esfuerzo país necesario. Los otros dos programas mencionados, el de descarbonización y el de bioeconomía, fueron propuestos por el presidente Carlos Alvarado entre 2018 y 2020, ambos de gran visión, pero sin contenidos financieros claros para que puedan ser ejecutados y sin una posible vinculación con los ya existentes en el país.

El presente trabajo realizó un estudio de casos múltiples con seis organizaciones de la ES de Costa Rica, con el objetivo de conocer los tipos de acciones concretas en favor del crecimiento verde, los beneficios obtenidos por estas acciones verdes en pro de la sostenibilidad e indagar la forma en que financiaron estos procesos. Todo esto con el fin de analizar y comprender cómo el sector de ES afronta los retos del CC y la sostenibilidad ambiental, económica y social dentro del entorno del crecimiento verde.

## FUNDAMENTACIÓN TEÓRICA

Lograr la sostenibilidad ante el CC y el reto que implica el manejo racional de los ecosistemas debe ser un tema presente en las organizaciones, sean públicas, fundaciones, de capital privado con fines lucrativos (nacionales o transnacionales), vinculadas a la ES o de cualquier otro tipo. Una forma en que las organizaciones han tratado de lograr un proceso sostenible es bajo la gestión ambiental y su accionar es definido por Massolo (2015) como:

El conjunto de acciones y estrategias mediante las cuales se organizan las actividades antrópicas que influyen sobre el ambiente con el fin de lograr una adecuada calidad de vida previniendo o mitigando los problemas ambientales. Partiendo del concepto de desarrollo sostenible, se trata de conseguir el equilibrio adecuado para el desarrollo económico, crecimiento de la población, uso racional de los recursos y protección y conservación del medio ambiente. (p. 11)

Las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero, como fuentes antropocéntricas generadoras del CC, no dejan de crecer (Peters *et al.*, 2019) y las economías tienden a acoplar su crecimiento —medido por el producto interno bruto (PIB)— a las emisiones de carbono y sus equivalentes (OCDE, 2017); Costa Rica no es la excepción (Campos-Rudin, 2019). Debido a estos resultados, se requieren acciones diferentes para descarbonizar las economías y buscar la sostenibilidad. Una estrategia es el crecimiento verde (CV) y las organizaciones de la ES pueden ser un pilar para potenciar este proceso.

## El crecimiento verde y la economía social

El CV tiene varias definiciones y orientaciones. Para el presente estudio se tomó la definición que brinda la Organización para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo Económico (OCDE), organización a la cual Costa Rica fue admitida en 2021. La OCDE (2011) define que el:

Crecimiento verde significa fomentar el crecimiento y el desarrollo económicos y al mismo tiempo asegurar que los bienes naturales continúen proporcionando los recursos y los servicios ambientales de los cuales depende nuestro bienestar. Para lograrlo, debe catalizar el desarrollo sostenible, inversión e innovación que apuntalen el crecimiento sostenido y abran paso a nuevas oportunidades económicas. (p. 17)

El CV se vincula con los denominados Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible del siglo XXI (ODS), entre los cuales se pueden citar algunos como el objetivo 12, que menciona la producción y consumo responsables, el 13 aborda la acción por el clima, el 14 la vida submarina, el 15 la vida de ecosistemas terrestres, mientras que el 16 y 17 se vinculan con el desarrollo sostenible (Naciones Unidas, 2015). Estos objetivos influyen sobre el CV al establecer un uso sostenible de los recursos ecosistémicos para esta y las futuras generaciones.

La ES se puede integrar de forma activa con el CV y los ODS del siglo XXI. La comisión científica del Centro Internacional de Investigación e Información sobre la Economía Pública, Social y Cooperativa (CIRIEC-España), citada por Montolio (2002), define la ES como un:

Conjunto de empresas privadas que actúan en el mercado con la finalidad de producir bienes y servicios, asegurar o financiar y en las que la distribución del beneficio y la toma de decisiones no están ligadas directamente con el capital aportado por cada socio, correspondiendo un voto a cada uno de ellos. (p. 19)

La CIRIEC-España añade que esto vincula a aquellas organizaciones de productores, no de mercados privados y no controladas por la administración pública, donde se dirigen acciones específicas para un grupo de consumidores o personas (Montolio, 2002). La ES posee, según Salinas (2003), una serie de elementos que la definen y complementan:

i. La Economía Social se definirá como aquella actividad económica que tenga por objeto trabajar para sus miembros y usuarios y para la sociedad... ii. Las personas están por encima del capital... iii. La solidaridad es el motor de la Economía Social... iv. Es una concepción de empresa en sentido amplio, referido a la gestión de recursos disponibles para la eficaz consecución de los objetivos sociales. v. Subyace en todo ello un eje económico y colectivo que tiende a concebir este tipo de actividad en valores de riqueza colectiva (no de enriquecimiento individuales). (p. 99)

A partir de la cita, la ES se puede vincular a varios de los ODS y, de manera consecuente, no puede lograr un riqueza colectiva sostenible en este nuevo milenio si no se gestiona un CV junto con otras tendencias de gestión, como la bioeconomía circular, que pueden ser acopladas integralmente a la ES (García-Barquero *et al.*, 2018).

En Costa Rica la ES tiene organizaciones activas desde mediados del siglo XX, las cuales son posibles de constatar por su rápido crecimiento en cantidad (Quesada, 2008). El solidarismo brinda, a las empresas de capital lucrativo y a sus colaboradores, un modelo gestado en la economía costarricense, donde existen consideraciones a favor y en contra de este (Soto, 1987). De la Ley de Asociaciones Solidaristas N.º 6970 se extraen puntos relevantes que marcan su accionar. El solidarismo y los fondos que se inyectan a la asociación sirven para aliviar necesidades financieras o sociales de los afiliados, los cuales la conforman únicamente los colaboradores de la empresa. Las herramientas financieras que brindan poseen tasas favorables bajo principios éticos. El dinero aportado mínimo por cada colaborador se acuerda entre los afiliados y el equivalente depositado por la empresa, el dinero solo puede ser

retirado en su totalidad cuando se termina la relación laboral con la empresa madre. Este tipo de modelo, además de apoyar a los colaboradores de la empresa en temas económicos y sociales, busca eliminar o alivianar posibles conflictos obrero-patronales (ASOUNA, 2021).

Dentro de la ES se ubica la banca ética. La banca ética busca diferenciarse de la banca tradicional que solo persigue resultados técnicos y, de forma tradicional, procede a dar dinero bajo hipotecas que cubran el 100% del crédito y negocios tradicionales con resultados a corto plazo. De modo que los ahorrantes no pueden definir dónde realizar inversiones. Según Ruiz y Retolaza (2007), banca ética se define: “por los sectores o tipo de actividades donde en las que colocan dinero (activo) y por la opción de crear conciencia y compromiso entre los depositarios, permitiéndoles decidir el destino de sus fondos (pasivos)” (p. 1104).

La banca ética no se enfoca en brindar únicamente microcréditos para empresas sociales. Se vincula con organizaciones que buscan potenciar la filantropía, procesos mediante los cuales las corporaciones, bajo la responsabilidad social corporativa, ayudan a grupos en riesgo, con el fin de que estos puedan desarrollar algún tipo de emprendimiento. Aunque las iniciativas microfinancieras dieron a Yunus el Premio Nobel de la Paz en 2006 por la creación del Grameen Bank, el querer emular el modelo del Grameen Bank en otro contexto no ha dado los resultados esperados (Sasia, 2008). En Costa Rica un modelo de banca ética es el Instituto Nacional de Vivienda y Urbanismo (INVU), una institución que brinda bonos de vivienda, planes de ahorro y crédito con tasas preferenciales menores a la banca tradicional (INVU, 2021). Otra forma de visualizar la banca ética son las cajas de ahorro y préstamo, las cuales son usadas en la economía social para ayudar a los afiliados en temas financieros y sociales, como el caso de la JUNTA UCR (2021).

Las cooperativas son el tercer modelo asociativo analizado en esta investigación. Según Martínez (2015), “la cooperativa es un origen, un recurso para obtener de forma compartida la satisfacción de una necesidad común. Es una alternativa a las posibilidades o la falta de posibilidades, y una aplicación más de la obtención de la fuerza mediante la unión” (p. 35). De forma más detallada está la definición de cooperativismo planteada por la Alianza Cooperativa Internacional (ACI, 2021), como “una asociación de personas que se han unido de forma voluntaria para satisfacer las necesidades y aspiraciones económicas, sociales y culturales en común mediante una empresa de propiedad conjunta y de gestión democrática”.

Las cooperativas tienen siete principios que las rigen:

- 1) Afiliación voluntaria y abierta
- 2) Control democrático de los miembros
- 3) Participación económica de los socios
- 4) Autonomía e independencia
- 5) Educación, formación e información
- 6) Cooperación entre cooperativas
- 7) Sentimiento de comunidad (ACI, 2021).

En el séptimo principio es donde se puede vincular el CV a las cooperativas, pues en este se busca el desarrollo sostenible de sus comunidades, por medio de las políticas y gestiones avaladas por sus afiliados o miembros. El ambiente cambiante y con retos para lograr la competitividad sostenible obligan a las cooperativas a buscar procesos de innovación (Marcuella y Saz, 2008). Además, las lleva a implementar en forma continua modelos de responsabilidad social y acciones ambientales para lograr resistir en momentos de crisis. Estas cooperativas han logrado mostrar procesos de resiliencia mayores que otras organizaciones (Martínez, 2015). Estos procesos de innovación y acciones para lograr el CV deben impulsarse por medio de herramientas financieras verdes (HFV).

## Herramientas financieras verdes para impulsar el crecimiento verde

La ES busca una equidad para que los beneficios económicos se distribuyan de forma homogénea en la sociedad, se logra así un balance entre lo económico y social, esto ante la creciente inequidad del aumento económico en las naciones (Ben-Ner, 2018), pero para lograr un proceso sostenible se ocupa control sobre la parte ambiental.<sup>1</sup> La gestión o desarrollo de acciones concretas para lograr afrontar el reto de la sostenibilidad ambiental al buscar un CV y afrontar el CC requiere de insumos financieros.

Nicolas Stern, en su conocido Informe Stern, sobre la economía y el CC publicado en el año 2006, realizado por solicitud del gobierno de Inglaterra, detalla que los costos económicos y sociales del CC se estiman por ton de CO<sub>2</sub> en USD\$85. Este informe indica que para reducir o contener en 1°C el calentamiento global y para estabilizar las emisiones entre 500-550ppm de CO<sub>2</sub>, esto equivaldría para el año 2050 al 1 % (-2 %, +5 %, rangos) del PIB si se tomaran las medidas oportunas a tiempo (Stern, 2010).

Otra forma de visualizar el impacto del CC es por medio de los cisnes verdes. Bolton *et al.* (2020) publica su informe *The Green Swan*, donde manifiesta el arribo de una crisis ambiental que tendrá efectos ambientales, sociales y económicos de dimensiones globales mayores a los conocidos, en la cual el CC es uno de los promotores. Los autores señalan que a diferencia de las crisis financieras generadas por catástrofes naturales (por ejemplo, terremotos), actos de terrorismo o especulación, en las que hay fuertes afectaciones económicas o sociales temporales, denominados cisnes negros; los cisnes verdes pueden poner en riesgo la misma existencia de la humanidad y sus efectos generarían fuertes reacciones en cadena, complejas e impredecibles para el ambiente, la economía y la sociedad. La actual crisis de salud y económica generada por el covid-19 podría ser considerada un cisne verde.

La sostenibilidad ambiental para ser atendida y evitar los cisnes verdes, requiere de protección de la biodiversidad, protección y uso racional de los ecosistemas, reducción de gases de efecto invernadero, planes de mitigación y adaptación ante el CC, ecoeficiencia, planes de gestión ambiental, educación ambiental, inversión en energías limpias, protección del recurso hídrico, por citar las más relevantes (The Board of the Millenium Ecosyste Assesment, 2005). No está únicamente vinculado a controlar las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero y contrarrestar el CC.

La generación de diversas HFV es requerida para implementar un proceso de CV. En los informes de Finanzas para la Biodiversidad (BIOFIN) se pueden localizar datos sobre la gran diversidad de herramientas financieras que pueden implementarse para apoyar un CV (PNUD, 2018).

BIOFIN realizó un exhaustivo análisis de instrumentos financieros disponibles, con el objetivo de aplicar medidas vinculadas con la preservación de la biodiversidad y la sostenibilidad de los recursos ecosistémicos. De manera global, este programa detecto más de 150 soluciones financieras (PNUD, 2018). Los instrumentos financieros fueron separados por BIOFIN en las siguientes categorías:

- 1) Préstamos tradicionales y concesionales. Bajo ese esquema se buscaba capital de trabajo para que los bancos ofrecieran créditos para realizar procesos verdes. El Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo ha dado préstamos concesionales a Latinoamérica para enfrentar el CC.
- 2) Subsidios bilaterales y multilaterales. Estos son fondos económicos brindados por organismos internacionales para mitigar o adaptarnos al CC.
- 3) Canjes de deuda. Estos mecanismos, en la parte ambiental, una nación con deudas puede canjear su deuda con el acreedor al gestionar proyectos ecológicos o de conservación.
- 4) De gestión de riesgo. Es cualquier instrumento que implique la transferencia de riesgos entre dos o más partes. Puede ser el pago de un seguro o un acuerdo específico entre las partes.
- 5) Fiscal. Se refiere a la generación de ingresos para lograr un cometido, basado en reformas tributarias como la generación de un impuesto a la utilización de plásticos de un solo uso. Tiene la desventaja de que, en naciones en vías de desarrollo, pueden ser un elemento que promueva la evasión fiscal, o simplemente su efecto, en general, afectaría a las clases más pobres.

<sup>1</sup> Para esta investigación el concepto ambiental se refiere a los ecosistemas, la biodiversidad y los aspectos biológicos. No se contempla como ambiental las relaciones obrero-patronales o incidentes laborales dentro de las organizaciones.

- 6) De mercado. Cualquier instrumento que implique transacciones o precios de mercado que influya directamente sobre estos, se dan las condiciones de oferta y demanda de un producto o servicio. Por ejemplo, Nestlé en Francia paga a los agricultores por la conservación del agua. Los mercados de carbono pueden ser incluidos en este rubro.
- 7) Bonos verdes. Representan menos del 1 % del mercado global de bonos, pero se hallan en crecimiento (Clapp, 2018). Pueden ser incluidos dentro de los instrumentos de mercado, pero se separan por su gran versatilidad si logran en un futuro tener una amplia participación en el mercado bursátil.
- 8) Normativo. Implica la generación de multas o castigos financieros a las personas y organizaciones que generen daños al ambiente y la biodiversidad. Este incluye la generación de leyes y reglamentos para su correcta ejecución.

Las HFV en Costa Rica se pueden ubicar en la banca estatal y la banca privada, muchas de estas entidades ofrecen créditos diferenciados para optar por la compra de productos vinculados con la sostenibilidad ambiental. No es de interés de esta investigación contrastar las tasas de interés y condiciones de los créditos con los créditos hipotecarios o líneas de crédito convencionales, por lo cual no se discutirá si estos créditos verdes son o no competitivos para las organizaciones. Por este motivo solo se presenta en la tabla 1 un extracto de organizaciones bancarias y no bancarias que han canalizado HFV en Costa Rica.

**Tabla 1. Entidades bancarias, cooperativas, cámara de industrias y otras entidades financieras**

Entidad financiera / Organización de la ES	Nombre de la HFV
Bolsa Nacional de Valores (BNV)	BNV sostenible
Banco Nacional de Costa Rica	BN pyme verde
Banco de Costa Rica	Eco-créditos
Banco Popular	Eco-créditos
Banco Promerica	Créditos Verdes
Bac San José	Green Pymes
Banco Scotiabank	No tiene una línea específica
Banco Lafise	Eco-créditos
Fundecooperación	Apoyo general a proyectos verdes
Cámara de Industrias de Costa Rica (CICR)	Apoyo amplio a proyectos verdes*
JUNTA UCR	Tecnológico

\* La CICR no es una entidad financiera, es una entidad que busca gestar alianzas con bancos extranjeros y nacionales.

Fuente: Información desplegada en las páginas web oficiales de las diferentes entidades mencionadas.

Con respecto a la venta o comercialización de bonos carbono y bonos de sostenibilidad, en Costa Rica existe la opción de financiar proyectos con un fuerte componente verde, por medio de la BNV (2021). Además, existen fondos semilla para emprendedores y pequeñas empresas para realizar mejoras en temas de sostenibilidad, con lo cual en el país se disponen de HFV para apoyar el desarrollo de proyectos verdes (Procomer, 2021).

## METODOLOGÍA

### Tipo de estudio y muestra de estudio

Esta investigación se realiza bajo el paradigma cualitativo, como un estudio de casos múltiples explicativo. La selección de la muestra no probabilística se gestó bajo el criterio experto de investigador; este tipo de muestreo no probabilístico requiere que el investigador tenga conocimiento para elegir los casos de forma asertiva (Martínez-Salgado, 2012). Para la elección de los casos de estudio, el investigador planteó como base dos criterios: ser organizaciones con más de 30 años de operar en Costa Rica y haber demostrado acciones concretas en el tema ambiental, en la preservación de los ecosistemas, energías alternativas o haber obtenido certificaciones verdes.

Luego, se procedió a invitar a las organizaciones para participar, aquellas que respondieron fueron preseleccionadas. Posterior a esto, el investigador visitó el ecosistema en que estaban inmersas las organizaciones para validar si estas tenían un impacto en sus afiliados y si los productos o servicios tenían componentes verdes en el sitio, además de revisar en sus páginas web su historia y acciones por la sostenibilidad social, ambiental y económica. Las organizaciones seleccionadas dentro del estudio fueron cuatro cooperativas (CoopeTarrazú R.L., Coopedota R.L., Coopesantos R.L., y CoopeVictoria R.L.), una asociación solidaria ASOELAGAR y la JUNTA UCR. Se trató de establecer contacto con cooperativas vinculadas al sector financiero, pero no se logró obtener respuestas favorables de interés para participar en el estudio de casos.

### Recolección de datos

Se realizaron encuestas a directivos y ejecutivos de las organizaciones seleccionadas bajo el formato de escala Likert. Por medio de 49 variables cerradas se documentó el impacto de las acciones y beneficios derivados de estrategias vinculadas al CV, las cuales fueron agrupadas en tres ejes temáticos: acciones concretas para el CV, herramientas financieras (HF) y los beneficios percibidos por la organización en lo social, económico y ecológico o ambiental. Todos los ejes se subdividieron en varios conceptos para el análisis. El tema ambiental, para esta investigación, se vinculó con los ecosistemas, recursos ecosistémicos y biodiversidad.

Las entrevistas fueron realizadas entre febrero de 2020 y febrero de 2021. Aquellas realizadas antes de la pandemia por el covid-19 o en momentos de muy baja incidencia, se hicieron de forma presencial, otras fueron ejecutadas de manera virtual, mediante la plataforma Zoom.

### Variables de estudio según los ejes de investigación

El eje acciones concretas en CV se subdivide en tres conceptos: el ecológico, el de energía y el de certificaciones verdes (en la tabla 2 se listan las variables utilizadas). El eje HF se divide en dos conceptos: las herramientas financieras convencionales (HFC) y las HFV. Las HFC se consideran todos los mecanismos financieros regulares basados en hipotecas, créditos comerciales y cualquier otro no diferenciado del tema verde. Las HFV son mecanismos vinculados con bonos de carbono, pagos por servicios ambientales, créditos específicos para temas verdes y fondos específicos para acciones verdes. El detalle de las variables se observa en la tabla 2.

Eje sostenibilidad, beneficios económicos, sociales y ambientales derivados del CV se basa en tres conceptos: el ambiental, el económico y el social. En este eje temático se buscó estimar los impactos que las acciones verdes y el uso de HFV han tenido sobre la sostenibilidad de la organización; incluso se contempló una variable sobre el covid-19.

### Análisis de datos obtenidos

Todas las variables se analizaron bajo la escala de Likert, donde la valoración del impacto de las medidas adoptadas se codificó de la siguiente forma: 0, no aplica; 1, no tuvo; 2, bajo; 3, regular; 4, mediano, y 5, alto. La información colectada en las organizaciones se ponderó y se procedió a graficar los datos para cada una de las variables agrupadas por eje temático y por concepto, con la finalidad de obtener los resultados individuales para su análisis.

Para efectuar un análisis global y generar un posible indicador para todas las organizaciones, se realizó el diseño y cálculo de tres tipos de índices de impacto basados en las respuestas obtenidas en la escala de Likert, al cuantificar porcentualmente el impacto de cada variable. Para cada variable analizada el puntaje máximo era 5, el cual es equivalente a alto impacto, de esta forma si las seis organizaciones analizadas respondieron como alto impacto se obtiene el puntaje máximo de 30 puntos (5 pts. x 6 respuestas). Este razonamiento se aplicó para generar un índice de impacto por cada variable y se contabilizó el valor porcentual.

**Tabla 2. Variables analizadas en las entrevistas para los casos de estudio, agrupadas por eje temático**

Eje acciones CV (n=16)	Eje HF (n=18)	Eje sostenibilidad, beneficios ambientales, económicos y sociales (n=15)
Concepto: Ecológico	Concepto: HFC (no verdes)	Concepto: Ambiental
1 Apoyo a socios o afiliados en temas verdes.	1 Beneficio fiscal no enfocado a CV.	1 Reducción de contaminación ambiental.
2 Construcción de infraestructura ecoeficiente.	2 Capital de los asociados.	2 Reducción riesgos ambientales en la organización.
3 Empaques ecológicos.	3 Capital propio de la organización.	3 Se logró proteger la biodiversidad.
4 Manejo de residuos.	4 Préstamos convencionales de la banca.	
5 Manejo del recurso hídrico.	5 SBD en forma general.	<b>Concepto: Económico</b>
6 Para protección de la biodiversidad.	6 Transferencias de Infocoop generales.	4 Crecimiento de mercado generado por CV.
7 Producción más limpia.	<b>Concepto: HFV</b>	5 Impacto de CV en el flujo de caja.
8 Producción verde o sostenible.	7 Bonos de carbono.	6 Impacto de CV en los ingresos netos.
	8 Créditos bancarios para ambiente.	7 Mejor productividad.
<b>Concepto: Energía</b>	9 Créditos bancarios para energías alternativas.	8 Nuevos mercados producto del CV.
9 Biocombustibles.	10 Créditos internacionales para energías alternativas.	
10 Calentadores solares.	11 Créditos internacionales para CV.	<b>Concepto: Social</b>
11 Eólico.	12 Créditos por fondos específicos para CV.	9 En la sostenibilidad hay beneficios percibidos por afiliados.
12 Equipos de alta eficiencia o ecoeficientes.	13 Fondos concursables no reembolsables para CV.	10 Los asociados se han visto beneficiados por el CV.
13 Fotovoltaico.	14 Fondos de Infocoop para CV.	11 Los procesos de CV han tenido impacto para ser resilientes ante el covid-19.
14 Uso de biomasa.	15 Fondos SBD para CV.	12 Los procesos de CV han generado resiliencia en tiempos de crisis.
Concepto: Sellos o certificaciones verdes	16 Ingresos por pagos vía PSA Fonafifo.	13 Mejor calidad de vida de los asociados.
15.15 Carbono neutral y certificaciones verdes.	17 Otro tipo de crédito para impulsar CV.	14 Nuevos empleos.
16 Certificaciones por eficiencia energética.	18 Otro tipo de fondos para mejoras ambientales.	15 Salarios sostenibles.

Se usó la siguiente fórmula para el análisis:

- Índice de impacto porcentual (%) por variable = (total de puntos obtenidos / 30 puntos) \* 100.

Si para una variable A se obtuvo un puntaje de 30 y para variable B 20 puntos, se obtendrían los siguientes índices de gestión:

- Variable A: índice de impacto 100 %.
- Variable B: índice de impacto 66,7 %.

Con este proceso de cálculo se obtuvieron tres tipos de índices de impacto, uno por cada eje temático: el índice de impacto en acciones verdes (IIACV), el índice de impacto en HF (IIHF) y el índice de impacto vinculado a los beneficios sostenibles (IIS).

## RESULTADOS

Las organizaciones que fueron analizadas para valorar su accionar al inducir un CV tienen diversas características que las posicionan en sus sectores, en la tabla 3 se presentan variables que ayudan a comprender las dimensiones de su operación. La menos longeva es ASOELAGAR fundada en 1986, y las demás superan los 50 años de existencia, lo que las posiciona como entidades vinculadas a la economía de Costa Rica.

En la tabla 3 se presenta su actividad primaria, para unas es financiera y otras se centran en la producción y generación eléctrica. Las cooperativas de este estudio brindan servicios financieros como banca de segundo piso con fondos del Sistema de Banca para el Desarrollo (SBD), dado que este no es su fin, se ve como un beneficio a los afiliados. Se hace referencia en la tabla 3 que en el caso de la JUNTA UCR y ASOELAGAR sus servicios son exclusivos para los colaboradores de las organizaciones, por ello se les considera cerradas. Pero, las cooperativas sí brindan o intercambian bienes y servicios con sus afiliados y público externo.

**Tabla 3. Datos y características de las organizaciones vinculadas a la ES**

Organización	Año de fundación	Número de afiliados	Empleos directos	Tipo de operación*	Patrimonio	Acciones verdes relevantes	Mercado**
ASOELAGAR	1986	700	3	Servicios financieros.	ND	Financió paneles de celdas fotovoltaicas al Grupo El Lagar.	Cerrado a los afiliados
JUNTA UCR	1940	9000 a 10000 funcionarios de la UCR	74	Servicios financieros.	ND	Servicios financieros verdes especializados en construcción, autos y equipos.	Cerrado a los afiliados
Coopesantos	1965	38.183	199	Producción de energía eléctrica por sistema eólico.	34.267 mil millones de colones en el año 2020	Bonos de carbono internacionales y protección de recurso hídrico	Nacional
Coopedota	1960	900	110	Producción de café.	ND	carbono neutral, Alliance Rain Forest.	Nacional e internacional
Coopetarrazú	1960	4650	312	Producción de café.	6,763 mil millones de colones al año 2018	Alliance Rain Forest y comercio justo, abono orgánico, investigación y desarrollo.	Nacional e internacional
CoopVictoria	1943	2842	329	Producción de café y azúcar.	14.133 mil millones de colones al año 2018	Carbono neutral, "Alliance Rain Forest", biocombustibles, abono orgánico.	Nacional e internacional

ND: Los datos no están disponibles para el público en general, solo para afiliados.

\*Se destacan las más relevantes para cada organización.

\*\*Mercado se define como lugar donde colocar o vender productos o servicios, en el caso del solidarismo y la JUNTA UCR se enfocan en sus afiliados, por ello se denota como un mercado cerrado.

En sus acciones verdes concretas, la selección de ASOELAGAR se dio al generar un modelo financiero particular, donde la asociación solidarista financió la compra de paneles de celdas fotovoltaicas para el Grupo El Lagar. De este modo, logró un beneficio mutuo en ambas entidades, ingresos financieros para la agrupación solidarista y ahorro en la factura eléctrica en el Grupo El Lagar. Este modelo puede ser replicado por empresas de capital privado al recibir recursos financieros de la asociación solidarista, en la cual los colaboradores recibirán beneficios directos de la operación y ayudarán a la organización privada a ser más competitiva. También, puede ayudar a las organizaciones privadas a buscar procesos de carbono neutralidad.

En el caso de la JUNTA UCR, se analizó su amplia cartera de servicios financieros verdes y sociales para sus afiliados, funcionarios de la UCR, los cuales incluyen casas ecoamigables, carros eléctricos o compras de equipos. También, esta organización brindó charlas en temas y ferias verdes, aunque por motivos de la pandemia ha enfocado su vinculación más hacia el ámbito de la salud.

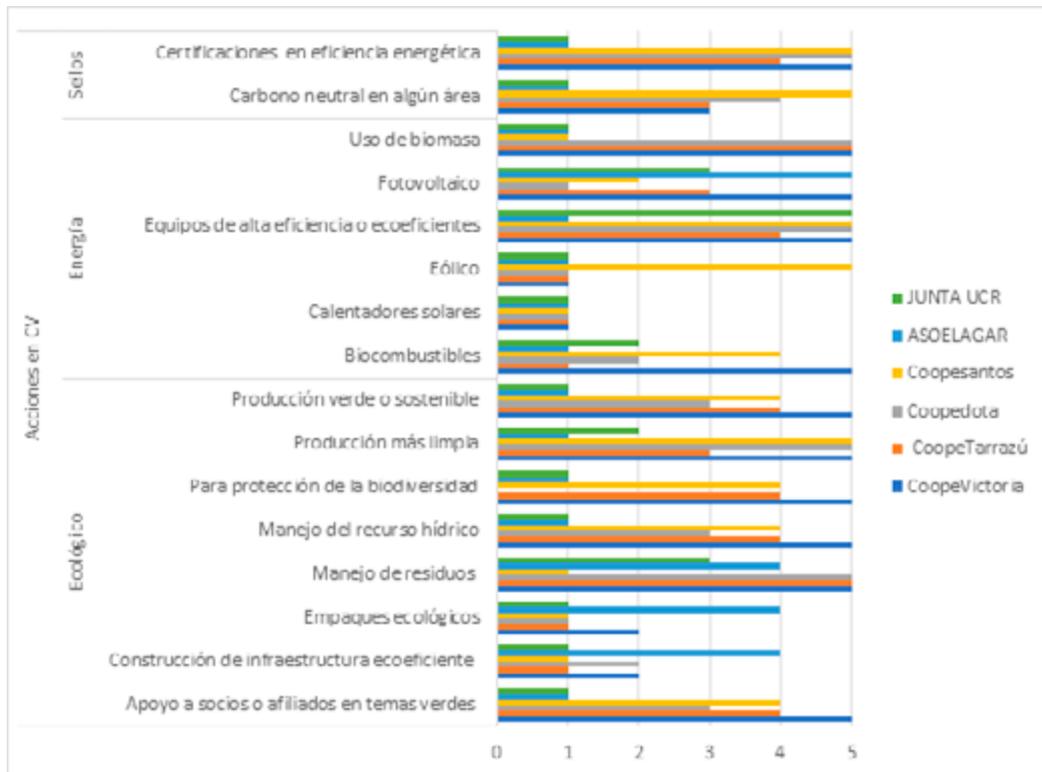
Las cooperativas analizadas, al ser abiertas al mercado en términos de productos o servicios que ofrecen, se mostraron más dinámicas en cuanto a las certificaciones verdes que acompañan a sus productos y servicios en su mercadeo, además de buscar certificaciones en comercio justo o bonos de carbono que les retribuyan de forma directa con ingresos financieros para la sostenibilidad de su operación. Esto sin incluir otras acciones verdes que no generan recursos financieros directos, como la protección de mantos acuíferos y apoyo a la gestión de acueductos rurales.

Un total de 49 variables fueron analizadas por cada organización, de las cuales 16 pertenecieron al eje de acciones verdes, 18 al eje de HF y 15 al eje de sostenibilidad. En la figura 1 se presentan los resultados obtenidos para el eje de acciones concretas en CV y su impacto dentro de la organización. En las organizaciones de la ES no vinculadas al cooperativismo el impacto se concentró en pocas acciones, como en el tema de energías alternativas, manejo de residuos e infraestructura ecoeficiente para ASOELAGAR; mientras que la JUNTA UCR obtuvo resultados con el uso de equipos ecoeficientes y producción más limpia por poco uso de papel por la pandemia, el teletrabajo, metas internas para la reducción de desechos y campañas para reducir el consumo de agua. En estas organizaciones, dos variables con nulo impacto fueron los calentadores solares y la producción verde; la primera, al ser financiera se pensó que podía ser requerida por sus afiliados, y la segunda, explica el resultado por ser organizaciones de servicios financieros.

En las cooperativas las valoraciones fueron diversas en el impacto mediano y alto. En la figura 1 se pueden destacar las variables: búsqueda de certificaciones verdes o energéticas, protección de recurso hídrico, manejo de residuos, protección de la biodiversidad y apoyo a los afiliados en temas verdes (la educación en este punto es una actividad consistente). Se observaron en las cooperativas valoraciones de bajo impacto en las siguientes variables:

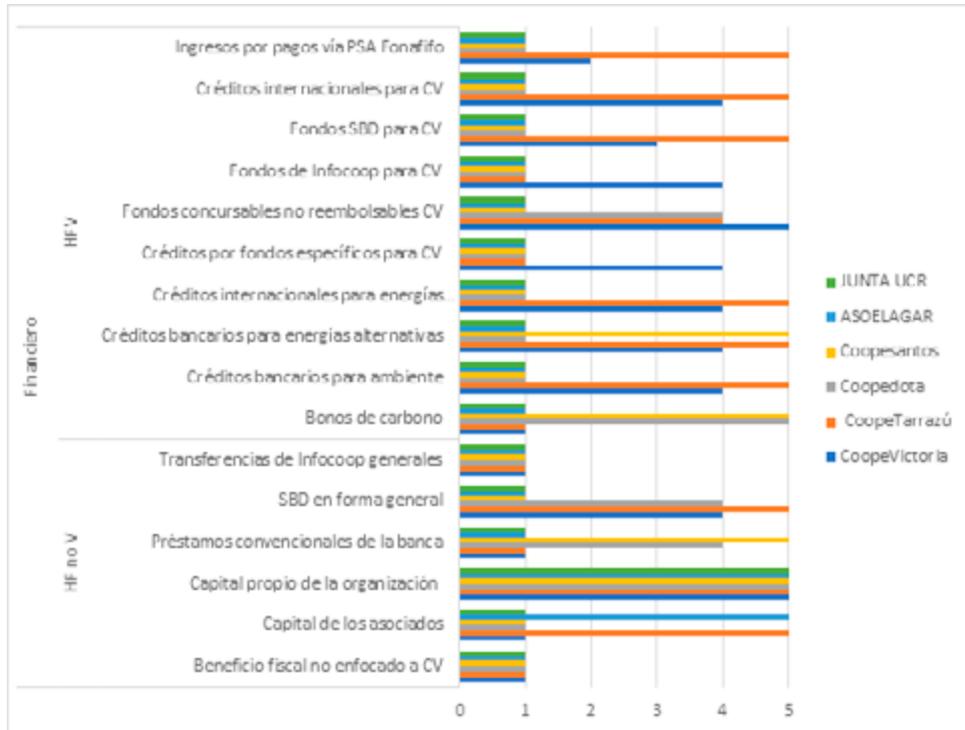
- 1) Calentadores solares. Estos productos no se contemplan dentro de esquemas operativos, aunque son los de mayor demanda en otros segmentos.
- 2) Empaques ecológicos. Su bajo impacto se visualizó cuando se respondió que, para ciertos productos como el café, aún no se dispone de un empaque ecoamigable que sustituya los actuales. También, la pandemia ha reducido envíos físicos de paquetería o similares.
- 3) Energía eólica. Este es un caso específico, solo Coopesantos R.L. la utiliza.
- 4) Construcción de infraestructura ecoeficiente. El rubro no mostró impacto en las organizaciones, pues no se detectaron proyectos de construcción ecoeficiente.

Figura 1. Valoraciones de los impactos descritos por los representantes de las organizaciones de la ES en el eje de acciones para el CV, en la escala Likert.



En la figura 2 se describe el impacto que tuvieron las HF en las organizaciones. Para el caso de las organizaciones no vinculadas al cooperativismo, se observa que no logran tener acceso a HF, y sus acciones son financiadas por el capital propio de la organización. En las cooperativas el uso de capital propio es de alto impacto, algunas utilizan bonos de carbono, créditos especiales para acciones verdes, ingresos por premios derivados de certificaciones como comercio justo o apoyo directo del SBD. De forma general, el uso de HFV es limitado en todas las organizaciones. Dos variables consultadas, otro tipo de créditos para impulsar el CV y otro tipo de fondos para mejoras ambientales, no tuvieron valoraciones y se dejaron como no aplicables, por ello no fueron incluidas en las figuras.

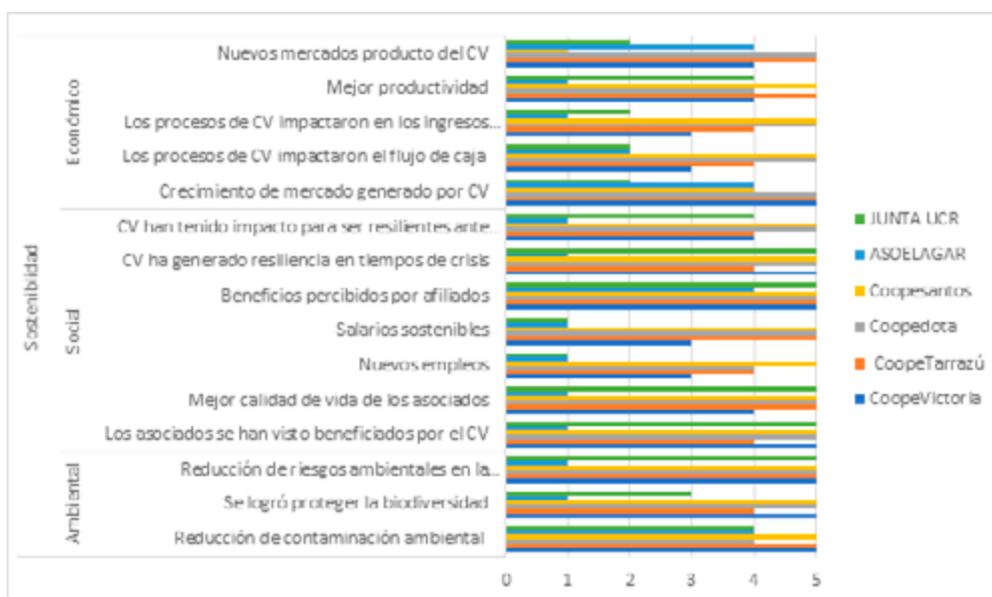
**Figura 2. Valoraciones de los impactos descritos por los representantes de las organizaciones de la ES en el eje temático HF, en la escala Likert.**



En la figura 3 se detalla cómo impactaron las variables vinculadas con la sostenibilidad en las organizaciones. Nuevamente, ASOELAGAR y JUNTA UCR son las que mostraron menor diversidad de impactos frente a las cooperativas, pero sí hay beneficios concretos en los conceptos económicos, sociales y ambientales para todas las organizaciones vinculadas con este estudio. Los afiliados a las cooperativas son los que perciben impactos medianos y altos en todas las variables analizadas.

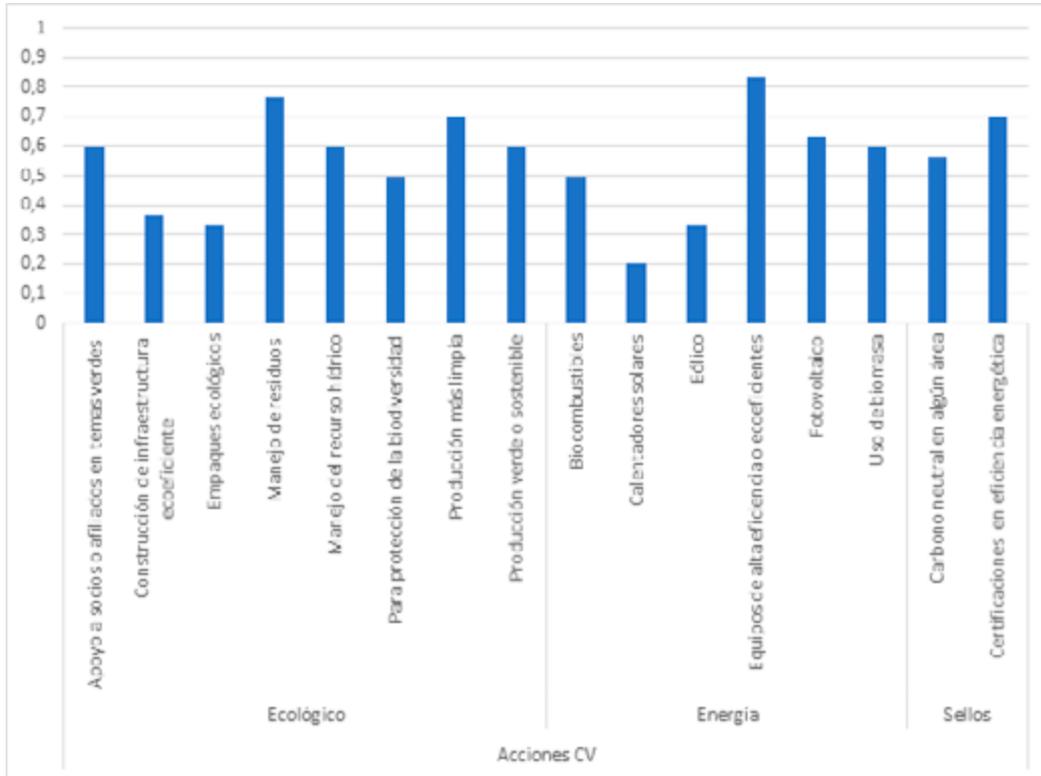
Para el eje temático de acciones en CV se generó el IIACV. En la figura 4 se presenta el valor obtenido por cada variable, puede observarse que solo cuatro de las variables tuvieron un valor inferior al 50 % (las vinculadas a infraestructura ecoeficiente, calentadores solares, energía eólica y empaques ecológicos). Se observan, con puntuaciones entre 50 % y menos de 60 %, tres categorías que deberían tener más presencia: la protección a la biodiversidad, carbono neutralidad y biocombustibles. Todas estas acciones son de gran interés para las estrategias de descarbonización y economía circular, lo cual hace considerar que existe margen de mejora.

**Figura 3. Valoración del impacto en las organizaciones sobre el eje sostenibilidad, agrupadas en los conceptos económico, social y ambiental, en la escala Likert.**



Utilizar el IIACV permite cuantificar las acciones y encontrar o detectar procesos que deberían ser reforzados para lograr un CV óptimo. El tema de la carbono neutralidad siempre es sensible, dado el costo económico del proceso de certificación. Este puede ser un elemento a considerar en las acciones directas con el SBD de Costa Rica, y conseguir certificaciones acompañadas de procesos de mejora en ecoeficiencia y reducción de emisiones en gases de efecto invernadero. Las certificaciones no pueden gestionarse sin HFV que estimulen las inversiones a tasas de interés éticas, pues los beneficios sociales de estas son amplios y se proyectan a futuro al descarbonizar las economías.

Figura 4. Análisis de valoración porcentual del IICV de las organizaciones.



En la figura 5 se detallan los resultados de todas las variables del eje vinculado al impacto de las HFV y las HF convencionales o no verdes y su IIHF. Se observa que pocas obtuvieron valoraciones altas como el uso de capital propio (100 %). Solo otras tres variables apenas sobrepasaron el 50 % del índice, por ejemplo, créditos específicos para energías alternativas y créditos del SBD. El uso de HFV y HF convencionales parece no generar un impacto en los casos analizados. Usar el IIHF expone con mayor claridad que se podría potenciar el CV si las organizaciones lograran acceder a HFV. En este indicador el margen para mejorar y crecer es elevado.

En el IIS en todas las variables se obtuvieron valores iguales o superiores el 60 %. Estos resultados se reflejan en la figura 6. Es posible observar que la variable de sostenibilidad social vinculada a los beneficios que recibieron los afiliados supera el 90 %, la reducción de la contaminación ambiental fue de un 90 % y los aportes para crecimiento en mercado de más de un 80 %, de este modo, los puntajes del desarrollo sostenible con respecto a lo económico, social y ambiental están en alta valoración. Debe notarse que las variables vinculadas con la resiliencia ante las crisis y el covid-19 mostraron valoraciones superiores al 75 %. Un punto donde las organizaciones pueden buscar una mejora es en la variable más baja relacionada con nuevos empleos, la cual obtuvo un 60 %.

**Figura 5. Análisis de valoración porcentual del índice de impacto de las HFV y las HF no verdes de las organizaciones.**

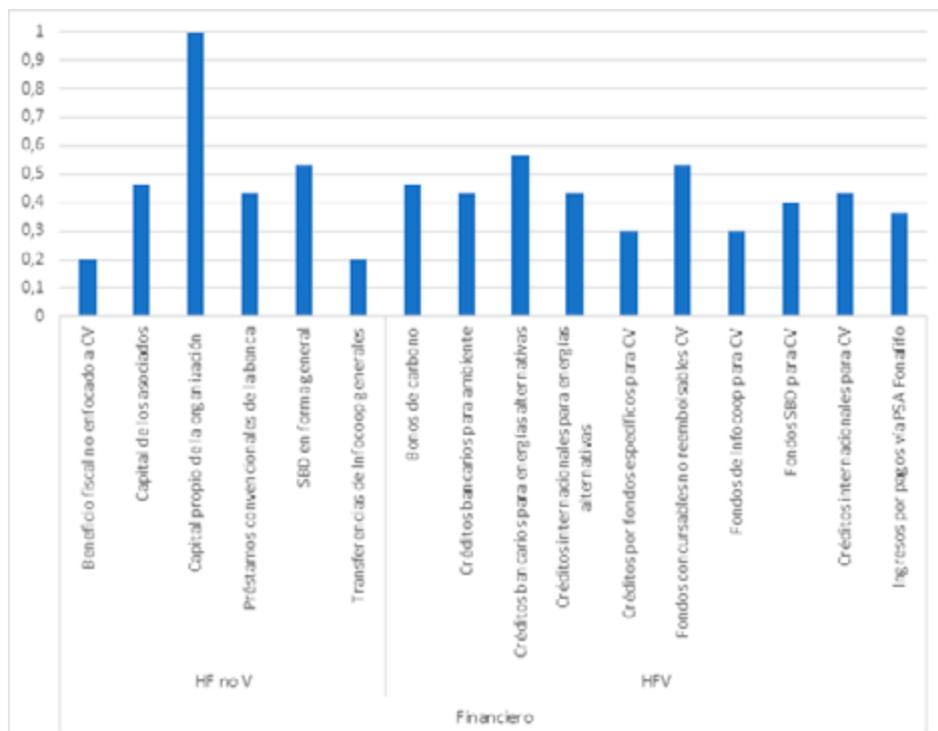
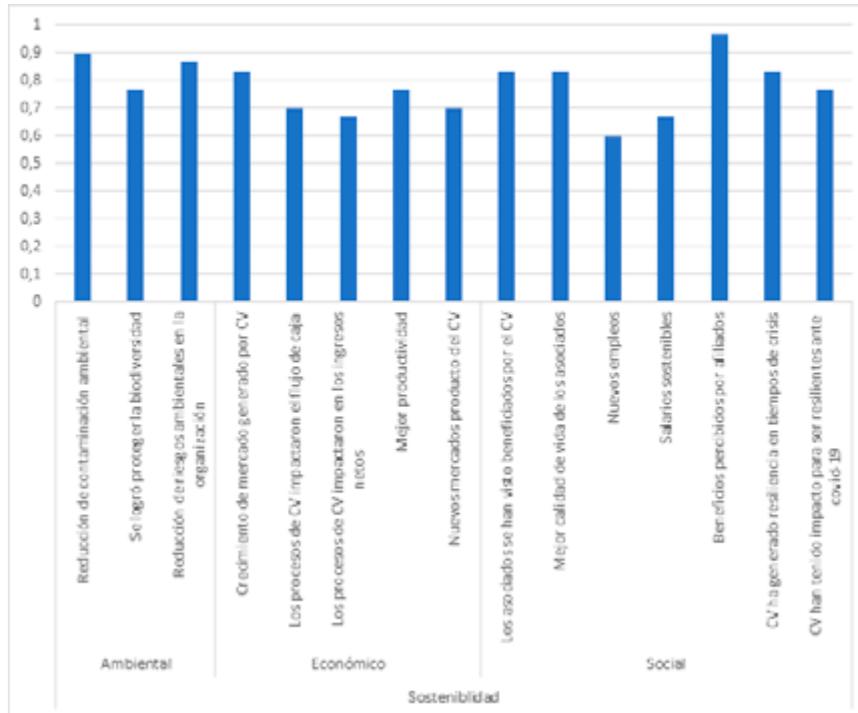


Figura 6. Análisis de valoración porcentual del IIS de las organizaciones.



## CONCLUSIONES

Las organizaciones vinculadas con la ES, en este estudio de casos, mostraron diferentes acciones y estrategias concretas para potenciar el CV. La poca diversidad de acciones para lograr un CV, dentro del solidarismo y las cajas de ahorro estudiadas, puede tener su justificación al ser organizaciones con funciones más cerradas, ya que tienen como población meta a los colaboradores o funcionarios de la empresa o universidad a la cual se vinculan. En el sector cooperativo, al tener la libertad de recibir afiliados y estar vinculado a la producción agrícola o de energía eléctrica (para los casos de estudio), sus acciones fueron más diversas, entre ellas la protección a la biodiversidad, protección de mantos acuíferos, conservación de bosques, uso de biomasa, por citar algunos ejemplos. El IACV analizado muestra resultados en forma global y se observa un accionar fuerte en manejo de residuos, producción limpia y variables vinculadas con energía. Estas valoraciones son esperables, pues generan impactos financieros directos en las organizaciones que aplican esas medidas.

El empleo de HFV fue limitado en los casos en que el uso de capital propio parece ser dominante, aunque el acceso a este tipo de financiamiento está disponible en el país. Se puede considerar que para el caso de la JUNTA UCR y ASOELAGAR no les es posible aplicar fondos especiales verdes, y para las cooperativas en general parece que el uso de HFV no es potenciado. Este hallazgo merece un estudio a profundidad para conocer los motivos y razones del débil impacto y valoraciones obtenidas en el IIFV, salvo el caso de la variable de capital propio.

El eje vinculado con los beneficios sociales, económicos y ambientales de los procesos realizados para lograr un CV tiene un impacto superior al 60 % en todas las variables analizadas, y en muchas superior al 80 % al estudiar el IIS. También, se observa que estos procesos les hace ver como organizaciones con mayor resiliencia ante crisis y contra la generada por el covid-19. La información obtenida sirve de base para pensar en un estudio mayor, de modo que se pueda conocer si estos beneficios se asocian con el acceso a nuevos mercados verdes, expansión de productos,

los beneficios derivados de las certificaciones verdes y los procesos de liderazgo que debieron desarrollar. Se deja también la inquietud de si al obtener HFV estos resultados podrían potenciarse a un nivel mayor.

Se concluye que las organizaciones analizadas en esta investigación de casos múltiples de la ES están vinculadas con el CV, y la conducción de estas se refleja en los resultados sobre los beneficios obtenidos. De manera diversa, han buscado migrar hacia la sostenibilidad económica, social y ambiental, pero se observa que hay vacíos y espacios por mejorar para lograr mayores impactos. Por último, la vinculación con HFV es muy limitada y deben explorarse las causas de estos resultados.

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## Currency rate its evolution from 1960 to 2020 and the exchange policies applied in Costa Rica

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### RESUMEN

Las variaciones que presenta el tipo de cambio tienden a modificar el poder adquisitivo de los ciudadanos de un país, de manera que cuando el valor de la moneda extranjera se aprecia, las personas con el mismo ingreso bruto en moneda nacional tienen menos posibilidades de adquirir bienes y servicios. El presente artículo muestra el resultado de una investigación descriptiva y bibliográfica, es un estudio de un periodo aproximado de 60 años de los datos de tipo de cambio, de compra, venta o promedio, que brindan los insumos requeridos para comprender las implicaciones de los cambios históricos en Costa Rica y la respectiva política cambiaria.

### RÉSUMÉ :

Les variations du taux de change ont tendance à modifier le pouvoir d'achat des citoyens d'un pays, de sorte que lorsque la valeur de la monnaie étrangère est appréciée, les personnes ayant le même revenu brut en monnaie nationale ont moins de possibilités d'acquiescer des biens et des services. Cet article montre le résultat d'une recherche descriptive et bibliographique, est une étude sur une période d'environ 60 ans des données de taux de change, d'achat, de vente ou de moyenne, qui fournissent les apports nécessaires en ce qui concerne les implications des changements historiques au Costa Rica et la politique de change correspondante.

### ABSTRACT:

The variations in the currency rate tend to modify the purchasing power of the citizens of a country, so that when the foreign currency revalues, people with the same gross income in national currency are less likely to acquire goods and services. This article shows the result of a descriptive and bibliographic research, it is a study of an approximate period of 60 years of the exchange rate, purchase, sale or average data, which provide the required inputs in relation to the implications of the historical changes in Costa Rica and the corresponding currency policy.

### RESUMO:

As variações que apresenta a taxa de câmbio tendem a modificar o poder aquisitivo dos cidadãos de um país, de forma que quando o valor da moeda estrangeira se aprecia, as pessoas com a mesma renda bruta em moeda nacional têm menos possibilidades de adquirir bens e serviços. Este artigo apresenta o resultado de uma investigação descritiva e bibliográfica, trata-se de um estudo de um período aproximado de 60 anos dos dados da taxa de câmbio, compra, venda ou média, que fornecem os insumos necessários em relação às implicações das mudanças históricas na Costa Rica e a respectiva política cambial.

### PALABRAS CLAVE:

LIBERALIZACIÓN CAMBIARIA,  
BANDAS CAMBIARIAS,  
MINIDEVALUACIONES,  
APRECIACIÓN.

### KEYWORDS:

CURRENCY LIBERALIZATION,  
CURRENCY BANDS,  
MINIDEVALUATIONS,  
REVALUATION.

### MOTS-CLÉS :

LIBÉRALISATION DES TAUX  
DE CHANGE, FOURCHETTES  
DE TAUX DE CHANGE,  
MINIDEVALUATIONS,  
APPRECIATION.

### PALAVRAS-CHAVE:

LIBERALIZAÇÃO DO CÂMBIO,  
BANDAS CAMBIAIS, MINI  
DESVALORIZAÇÕES,  
APRECIÇÃO.

## INTRODUCCIÓN

Las decisiones en materia económica de un país dependen de una serie de variables que por lo general se ajustan de forma automática, de acuerdo con las fuerzas de oferta y demanda del mercado que definen los precios de los bienes y servicios, al igual que los precios de los factores de producción. El valor que asumen los mismos a lo largo de la historia está sujeto a lo que se conoce como la mano invisible del mercado. Esta representa indicadores económicos o datos de carácter estadístico, que permiten hacer análisis de la situación económica de un país, y adquieren especial importancia por las implicaciones que tienen sobre la economía en general, por ello son particularmente relevantes. Si bien son determinados por el mercado, en algunas oportunidades las autoridades deben intervenir para la fijación de precios, por el impacto que tienen en la economía como un todo.

Una de estas variables o indicadores económicos es el tipo de cambio, el cual afecta las decisiones de consumo de los habitantes de un país. Ante la imposibilidad de conseguir en un solo documento el total de datos de esta variable, tanto en compra y venta, como en un promedio a lo largo de su historia en Costa Rica y ante el aumento que el tipo de cambio muestra a inicios del año 2021, se realiza un estudio de la evolución que ha tenido el tipo de cambio del dólar americano o estadounidense en Costa Rica en los últimos sesenta años (para los efectos de este artículo se le denominará con el nombre de dólar).

Sobre el precio de este indicador, el Banco Central de Costa Rica (BCCR) tiene injerencia directa según la política monetaria que el gobierno en turno haya definido. En distintos momentos de su historia, la velocidad de su crecimiento ha impactado de forma directa el poder adquisitivo y el bienestar de los costarricenses. Sin embargo, este será un tema por demostrar en una investigación que correlacione este indicador con indicadores de bienestar económico.

Con relación a la conformación de este artículo, se presentará una recopilación de la información estadística de este indicador, desde el año 1960 hasta el año 2020. Se mostrará tanto el precio de compra, como el de venta a diciembre de cada uno de los años del último medio siglo, así como el promedio del precio del dólar mensual en los últimos sesenta años. Se evidencian, para los momentos de cambio más relevantes a lo largo de este periodo, los datos de modificación diaria del dólar al precio de compra y venta del mismo, pero a partir del año 1983 se presentará el dato diario. Se detallarán la fecha y el periodo requerido para aumentos de cada ₡50,00, así como el valor que alrededor de los ₡500,00 se presentó por más tiempo en el mercado. Además, se hará una breve referencia a las diferentes modalidades de política cambiaria que se han aplicado en Costa Rica en las últimas seis décadas.

Se podrá observar la afectación que tuvo este indicador en el cierre de la segunda década del siglo XXI, producto de la pandemia por COVID-19. Dicha pandemia incidió directamente en las relaciones comerciales y las fuerzas de oferta y demanda del dólar en todo el mundo, situación que también tiene su impacto en el tipo de cambio en Costa Rica. Sobre todo por la falta del ingreso de dólares, ya que por más de 8 meses del año 2020 se cerraron las fronteras aéreas, con lo que el ingreso de divisas por turismo se vio fuertemente afectado. Sin embargo, aun así la variación relativa no llega a las proporciones que se pueden visualizar en la década de los años ochenta del siglo XX en Costa Rica. Es decir, aún con las implicaciones de esta pandemia, el efecto en el tipo de cambio en el 2020 no ha sido el más fuerte de la historia, y eso se evidenciará con la serie de datos que se recopilan y se presentan en este documento (Schatan, 1998).

La información de la serie histórica a partir del año 1983 se encuentra disponible en el BCCR y es factible ubicar la variación diaria. La información cambiaria antes de esta fecha debe ser ubicada en otros documentos generados por el mismo BCCR, pero que deben ser solicitados de forma expresa. Un detalle importante que el BCCR deja claro en su página es que antes de noviembre de 1983 estos datos corresponden a un mercado intercambiario, de 1983 a marzo de 1992 corresponde a un mercado libre intercambiario, y de esa fecha en adelante estos datos se convierten en un tipo de cambio de referencia del BCCR. Es decir que el valor que presente el BCCR, al ser solo de referencia deja una franja de acción a las entidades bancarias para que establezcan el valor al que compran y venden en la ventanilla de su banco.

La evolución del tipo de cambio del dólar, en referencia a las variaciones relativas de este indicador, como muchas otras variables en la economía tiene un comportamiento de crecimiento relativo cíclico, lo cual será mostrado en la información de este artículo. Esto afecta directamente el valor que presentan otra serie de indicadores de un país, por ejemplo, la inflación, el producto interno bruto (PIB), el crecimiento económico y el bienestar económico. Por ello, es importante poder visualizar otros momentos de depreciación o devaluación significativa, para poder estudiar los efectos en la economía y cómo se podrían prevenir afectaciones que en el pasado se relacionan directamente como productos de fuertes aumentos en el tipo de cambio del dólar.

A partir de las series históricas que se recopilan en este artículo y que se presentan en forma consolidada, al mostrar la evolución del tipo de cambio del dólar en Costa Rica, pueden surgir investigaciones sobre análisis comparativos con otros indicadores. Además, esta investigación puede funcionar como base o referencia para efectos académicos.

## METODOLOGÍA

Este trabajo investigativo se realiza bajo un enfoque que combina dos métodos de investigación: el método descriptivo, ya que se centra en la ubicación de los datos como objeto de estudio, en este caso el tipo de cambio a lo largo de la historia del periodo definido, y el método bibliográfico, debido a que se proceden a explicar las políticas cambiarias aplicadas, que se asocian con la trayectoria de los datos. La justificación de la escogencia del enfoque se fundamenta en el hecho de que este se ajusta a las necesidades y condiciones propias del entorno y ambiente que rodean al objeto de este estudio.

Lo anterior se acompaña con un análisis descriptivo y una revisión bibliográfica que incluye a los autores más citados y reconocidos en el tema. Además, se complementa con el criterio experto de la autora, en el seguimiento de este tema en los últimos veinte años, tanto en su condición de consultora como de docente.

## COYUNTURAS HISTÓRICAS Y EL TIPO DE CAMBIO

En la segunda década del siglo XXI, en Costa Rica y el mundo entero se vivió una de las crisis económicas más fuertes de la historia cercana, la cual se complica aún más por una pandemia sin precedentes que nace en Wuhan, China, a finales del año 2019. Esta será recordada como la pandemia por COVID-19, que quedará marcada en la historia mundial como un punto de referencia, pues detuvo la economía y comercio mundiales.

La historia de la colaboración económica y de la incorporación de Costa Rica a organismos internacionales como el Fondo Monetario Internacional (FMI), “organismo intergubernamental creado en 1945 por la ONU en base a los acuerdos de Bretton Woods cuyos objetivos son promover políticas cambiarias sostenibles a nivel internacional, facilitar el comercio internacional y reducir la pobreza a nivel mundial” (Blokhin, 2021, párr. 4), vuelve a tomar protagonismo en las decisiones trascendentales del país, como se tuvo en el momento de su creación, y que marcó el tipo de cambio fijo que, desde los años cincuenta hasta los setenta, se tuvo en Costa Rica.

Para mediados del siglo XX la economía costarricense se regía por un modelo económico de sustitución de importaciones. Esto comenzó a vislumbrarse desde finales de los años cincuenta, y desembocó a principios de la década de los sesenta en la promoción de un amplio proceso de industrialización y de integración económica. Fue en esos años que se inició en Costa Rica la implementación del llamado Modelo de Sustitución de Importaciones (MSI). Según Villasuso (2000), es un:

Modelo impulsado por la CEPAL en América Latina, y el cual se puso muy de moda entre los países subdesarrollados. Este sistema consistía en otorgarle incentivos a la industria local, con el propósito de que orientara su producción hacia el mercado interno, sobre todo de los bienes que normalmente se importaban. (p. 6)

Es en esta época donde nacen instituciones como la Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL), que para el 2021 en Costa Rica vuelve a tener un papel preponderante, para lograr la aprobación de créditos que permitan solventar la situación económica del país (Saborío-Muñoz, 1997).

En la época de los años cincuenta del siglo pasado, uno de los acuerdos de Bretton Woods, ciudad donde nace el FMI, fue que el tipo de cambio de Costa Rica se establecía básicamente como un tipo de cambio fijo y así se cumple hasta los años setenta. A pesar de este deterioro en el comercio regional, durante la década de los setenta Costa Rica tuvo acceso a una gran cantidad de recursos financieros, producto de los excedentes generados por la producción de petróleo a los países productores, y al aumento vertiginoso en los precios internacionales del café, el cual era su principal producto de exportación. Esta afluencia de recursos externos permitió ignorar durante unos años los problemas que existían en el sistema productivo costarricense. Cabe recalcar que durante todo el periodo el tipo de cambio permaneció prácticamente fijo, excepto por algunas pequeñas devaluaciones, lo cual iba muy en línea con lo estipulado por el acuerdo de Bretton Woods (Wonnacott y Wonnacott, 1981; Saborío-Muñoz, 1997).

Medio siglo después y al pasar por diferentes políticas cambiarias, la participación del FMI sigue presente en las políticas que debe tomar Costa Rica. El problema cambiario empieza a evidenciar su impacto en diferentes

indicadores económicos, producto de los niveles de endeudamiento excesivo y la poca liquidez que no le permite al Gobierno poder maniobrar, pues el mayor porcentaje del PIB se debe dedicar al pago de la deuda pública y lo que resta debe dedicarse al pago de la planilla estatal (Chinchilla, 2014).

Este panorama recuerda lo pasado en los años ochenta, aunque por motivos diferentes, pues en dicho periodo el problema enfrentado fue producto de un aumento en las tasas internacionales de interés, lo cual hizo que el presidente Rodrigo Carazo Odio de los años 1980 a 1982 declarara moratoria de la deuda en Costa Rica.

La crisis fue entonces inevitable. Las reservas monetarias internacionales se agotaron rápidamente y, a mediados de 1981, Costa Rica se vio obligada a comunicar a los bancos acreedores la imposibilidad de pagar el principal y los intereses de su deuda externa. (Lizano y López, 2006, p. 226)

En materia cambiaria en Costa Rica, se pasa en 1979 de un tipo de cambio que venía fijo desde 1970 en ₡8,60 hasta diciembre de 1979, a ₡14,31 por dólar a diciembre del 1980, y para finales del año 1981 se cierra con ₡36,18 como tipo de cambio de venta del dólar. Esta situación, como se evidenciará, hace que en menos de una década de 1979 a 1981, el tipo de cambio en términos relativos se devalúe en un 881 %, cambio relativo que aún en los dos primeros meses del año 2021 no se ha vuelto a presentar.

No obstante, la historia reciente, específicamente desde finales del año 2018, evidencia que la economía costarricense vuelve a presentar una serie de problemas con los que el panorama económico se complica. En este caso, dentro de los factores que son la base de esta situación apremiante se pueden mencionar el proceso electoral (donde el pluripartidismo se consolida) y el déficit fiscal que se complica a partir del año 2006, año en que ingresos fiscales y gastos fiscales lograron un equilibrio por última vez.

De acuerdo con las publicaciones de la época, el problema del tipo de cambio obedecía a que, según el presidente del Banco de Costa Rica:

Existían varios factores que estaban empujando el tipo de cambio al alza. Entre ellos, el aumento de la tasa de interés de los Estados Unidos, el aumento en el precio del petróleo, así como la situación de incertidumbre en el país por el rumbo de las finanzas públicas. (Delfino, 2018, párr. 8)

En el problema de las finanzas públicas sobresalían la discusión de las altas pensiones y la estructura salarial del empleo público. Temas que afectan directamente el PIB vía gastos y hace prever problemas económicos, los cuales se complican por las limitaciones para conseguir el financiamiento, que permita hacer frente a las deudas pactadas con altos intereses y de los gastos desmesurados del sector público.

El déficit fiscal y la necesidad de concertar una forma de generar ingresos tributarios y controlar el gasto público, llevaron a que en los meses de octubre y noviembre de 2018 se generaran una serie de rumores y la imposibilidad de colocar bonos del Gobierno, y otros mecanismos para recolección de liquidez para enfrentar los gastos. Esto provocó señales de riesgo que evidentemente han iniciado la afectación en una serie de variables económicas reales que han despertado el interés en su estudio.<sup>1</sup>

Una de las variables que a corto plazo más afectó de forma inmediata y directa en ese momento histórico a la población fue el tipo de cambio, el cual generó una moratoria significativa en los créditos de vivienda y automóviles en el sistema bancario nacional para el 2018. Lo anterior, producto del aumento de casi ₡10,00 que se hace el 7 de noviembre de 2018, fecha para la cual el tipo de cambio de venta del dólar alcanza su máximo valor absoluto de ₡631,30.

La política monetaria de mayor flexibilidad cambiaria que el BCCR decidió establecer en materia del tipo de cambio del dólar desde el mes de agosto de 2018, fue anunciada por don Rodrigo Cubero su presidente, lo cual generó en esta época un aumento del tipo de cambio (de ₡575 hasta ₡631) que ronda el 10 % de incremento en un periodo que abarca los meses de agosto a noviembre de 2018. Esto se evidencia en el periódico *La Nación* del 23 de agosto de 2018, en el apartado de política económica (Leitón y Ramírez, 2018).

<sup>1</sup> El tema del hoyo fiscal, y los problemas que desde el 2017 enfrenta Costa Rica se detalla en: <https://www.larepublica.net/noticia/hueco-fiscal-actuacion-del-gobierno-solis-o-engano-en-caprudentempana-electoral>

Las afectaciones de esta devaluación impactaron sobre todo en los costarricenses asalariados, que al tener ingresos en colones habían acudido al sistema financiero y se endeudaron en dólares, de modo que en poco tiempo sus pasivos se elevaron en la moneda local y sus gastos mensuales también se incrementaron por el aumento del pago de las cuotas de dichas deudas. Sin embargo, la contraparte que son los ingresos, se mantuvieron sin variación alguna, sobre todo porque de conformidad con la política monetaria del BCCR, se apostaba por mantener el índice de inflación en niveles que no superaban el 3 %, por lo que difícilmente se podían esperar aumentos salariales producto de ajustes al costo de vida.

Por todas estas razones, para entender mejor este tema y poder visualizar la evolución del tipo de cambio del dólar se presentan los datos consolidados de las últimas seis décadas en un solo cuadro. Al contar con la evolución de los datos y las políticas que se han implementado para determinar el mismo, la autora del presente artículo considera que serán de mucha ayuda a los tomadores de decisiones, o para los investigadores y estudiantes que requieran de estos datos consolidados, con el fin de generar relaciones econométricas, y buscar las relaciones de la variación del tipo de cambio en referencia a otros indicadores de interés.

Para una mejor comprensión del tema se presentará una breve explicación teórica del tipo de cambio y los principales términos del mismo. Al tener claro estos aspectos, se elabora un resumen mensual del tipo de cambio respecto al dólar, que abarca desde 1970 hasta el mes de diciembre de 2020, tanto en referencia al precio de compra como al de venta, así como un promedio mensual del precio de venta, para que se pueda visualizar su evolución en estos sesenta años. Se indicará y explicará la política cambiaria bajo la cual se ha manejado en Costa Rica el tipo de cambio para cada época.

## EL TIPO DE CAMBIO

El tipo de cambio nominal, según Mankiw (2009), es “la tasa a la que una persona puede intercambiar la divisa de un país por la de otro país” (p. 703). Esta representa la cantidad de unidades de una moneda que hay que entregar para obtener una unidad de moneda extranjera (Heilbroner y Lester, 1987; Samuelson y Nordhaus, 1992; Parkin, 1995; Krugman y Obstfeld, 2006).

Al igual que cualquier otro bien de la economía, el precio del tipo de cambio se establece por las fuerzas de mercado, es decir, por la interacción de la oferta y demanda de divisas prevalecientes en un momento dado. Esta representa el punto de equilibrio entre la cantidad de moneda extranjera que se requiere para hacer las transacciones de bienes y servicios en esa moneda, contra lo que los diferentes agentes económicos del mercado ofrecen de la misma (dentro de estos agentes el BCCR juega un papel muy importante en la estabilización de la divisa estadounidense). “Ese lugar donde se determina el precio de la moneda extranjera se conoce como “Mercado de divisas Extranjeras” o “Mercado de Cambios Exteriores” y funciona como cualquier otro” (Tacsan-Chen, 2001, p. 100).

Cuando el tipo de cambio sube o baja, estas variaciones pueden ser producto de:

- 1) Las fuerzas de oferta o demanda de las divisas asociadas con políticas cambiarias flexibles o flotantes.
- 2) Por decisiones de política económica de las autoridades monetarias.

Si el tipo de cambio sube se conoce con el nombre de devaluación, y si baja se le llama revaluación. Por lo general, estas se asocian con la confianza en la economía de un país, es decir, son los cambios en la divisa producto de la inestabilidad o estabilidad de la economía del país, que a su vez se relaciona con las políticas económicas del gobierno en turno.

El tipo de cambio real, según Salvatore (1994), “corresponde a la tasa nominal dividida entre el índice de precios al consumidor” (p. 683), lo que refleja la tasa a la que una persona puede intercambiar bienes y servicios de un país por bienes y servicios de otro país. Esta es la variable o índice relevante en la economía, en lo referente a la producción nacional, pues es el que evidencia si los productos de un país son más baratos o más caros que los del resto del mundo. Por fórmula se obtiene de la siguiente manera:

$$Tcr = Tcn * \frac{IPCrm}{IPCcr}$$

$$IPCcr$$

Tcr = Tipo de cambio real.

Tcn = Tipo de cambio nominal.

IPCrm = Índice de precios del resto del mundo.

IPCcr = Índice de precios de Costa Rica.

Como se puede apreciar en la fórmula, el tipo de cambio real está afectado directamente por la inflación del resto del mundo, pues si en los otros países la inflación aumenta el tipo de cambio real también aumenta. Por ello la producción se hace más competitiva, pero tiene una relación inversa con la inflación interna, de manera que si la inflación aumenta, la producción nacional se vuelve menos competitiva con las consecuencias que esto puede traer al resultado final del PIB del país.

El que el tipo de cambio se aprecie o se revalúe, quiere decir que se deben dar menos monedas de un país por la divisa del otro país; esto pocas veces se ha presentado en Costa Rica. En la década del 2000 es cuando este fenómeno más se presenta, dos eventos específicos se pueden ubicar si se compara el precio de venta del dólar de diciembre de 2006 a diciembre de 2007, donde la moneda, según el precio de referencia para venta del BCCR, se revalúa al pasar de ₡519,95 a ₡500,97 por dólar, de modo que se da un 3,65 % de disminución en el tipo de cambio. El caso de mayor revaluación se encuentra en los mismos términos de referencia, pero del 2009 al 2010, donde la divisa se aprecia al pasar de ₡571,81 a ₡518,09 por dólar, y se logra un aumento en el precio del colón, o una disminución en el precio del dólar de un 9,39 %.

A lo largo de la historia de Costa Rica las devaluaciones son más frecuentes, producto de las fuerzas de mercado que es cuando la divisa extranjera, en este caso el dólar, aumenta de valor con respecto al colón. La devaluación relativa más alta de la historia de Costa Rica se ubica entre 1980 y 1981, en los que de diciembre a diciembre el tipo de venta del dólar pasó de ₡14,31 a ₡36 por cada dólar, y se registró un aumento del 152,83 %. En términos absolutos, la devaluación más grande, por incertidumbre de mercado, corresponde al tipo de cambio de referencia del BCCR que se reportó el 7 de noviembre de 2018, con un valor de ₡631,30 por dólar.

Después de los años setenta en los que se contaba con un tipo de cambio fijo en ₡8,60, en Costa Rica, una vez que se dejó su definición a las fuerzas del mercado y con intervención del Gobierno, se ubica entre el mes de febrero de 2006 y hasta mayo de 2016 en ₡500,00 (monto menor a ₡550,00). Durante dicho periodo, el 23 de noviembre del 2007 el dólar sufrió una revaluación en un solo día de ₡16,08, pasando el tipo de cambio de venta de ₡521,23 a ₡505,15.

## DETERMINANTES DEL TIPO DE CAMBIO REAL

El tipo de cambio real de equilibrio no es un número inmutable, por el contrario, cada vez que algunas de las variables reales fundamentales sufren una variación, también deberá cambiar el tipo de cambio de equilibrio. Cualquier desviación del tipo de cambio real con respecto a uno del año base representa una situación de desequilibrio.

Teóricamente, muchos autores pueden enumerar varios factores para estas situaciones, los enfoques modernos mencionan los siguientes:

- 1) Términos internacionales de intercambio.
- 2) Flujos externos de capital que influyen en transferencias y donaciones.
- 3) El sistema de restricciones al comercio internacional que existe en el país.
- 4) El sistema tributario del país.
- 5) Tasa internacional de interés.
- 6) Composición del gasto del Gobierno.

- 7) El ritmo de progreso tecnológico existente en el país.
- 8) Gustos y preferencias de consumidores.
- 9) La política cambiaria que defina el Gobierno.

Una variación en cualquier factor implica una modificación en relación con los precios comerciables internacionalmente con respecto a los no comerciables. Sin embargo, el análisis de las causas para las variaciones del tipo de cambio que se llegaron a presentar en cada una de las seis décadas de interés, es un tema que quedará pendiente.

## POLÍTICA CAMBIARIA

Dentro de la economía existen una serie de variables que afectan la demanda agregada y la producción. Estas variables, por lo general, se dividen en dos grandes grupos:

- 1) Las que se denominan variables de política fiscal, pues afectan directamente la demanda agregada por medio del consumo (privado) o del gasto del Gobierno, donde se maneja las variables: gasto del Gobierno y los impuestos.
- 2) Por otra parte, se encuentra la política monetaria, en la cual, mediante el manejo de variables monetarias como las tasas de interés o el tipo de cambio, se logran movimientos en el mercado de dinero que afectan la tasa de interés o el tipo de cambio para variar la demanda agregada, ya sea por medio del gasto en inversión o de movimientos mediante el gasto en exportaciones netas, es decir, la diferencia neta entre exportaciones e importaciones.

Dentro de la política monetaria que es manejada en Costa Rica por el BCCR, existe la política cambiaria como una de las formas para movilizar la demanda agregada por medio de las exportaciones netas, y comprende el conjunto de acciones que toma el BCCR para lograr que el tipo de cambio se ajuste de forma real a las fuerzas de mercado cambiario. A lo largo de la historia cambiaria de Costa Rica se pueden distinguir diversas políticas cambiarias, a continuación se presenta un resumen de estas.

## POLÍTICA CAMBIARIA Y REGÍMENES CAMBIARIOS EN COSTA RICA 1960-2020

Durante las últimas décadas, Costa Rica ha observado diferentes regímenes cambiarios. La corta historia cambiaria de Costa Rica puede dividirse en 8 etapas:

- 1) Antes del año 1957, Jorge Guardia (Chinchilla, 2014) detalla que para el año 1945 el tipo de cambio del dólar de la Segunda República contaba con un valor de ₡5,62 por dólar, es la primera referencia de tipo de cambio que se puede ubicar en el BCCR.
- 2) De 1957 a 1960, el cambio nominal y real se mantuvieron sin variación gracias a la estabilidad internacional de las diferentes monedas y a que la inflación doméstica fue muy similar a la externa. A mediados de 1960 el tipo de cambio sufre una importante variación, lo cual culminó con una devaluación del colón de ₡6,15 a ₡6,65 por dólar a la venta.
- 3) De 1962 a mediados de 1970 el tipo de cambio permaneció invariable, o sea se establece como un tipo de cambio fijo. En 1971 se recurrió a una devaluación discreta que llevó el precio del dólar a ₡8,57 a la compra y a ₡8,60 por dólar a la venta. Esta estabilidad respondía a los pactos del FMI y a los acuerdos de Bretton Woods.
- 4) De 1974 hasta 1979 el tipo de cambio nominal fue de ₡8,54 la compra y ₡8,60 por dólar la venta. Este cambio se mantuvo temporalmente gracias a la bonanza cafetalera mundial y a la abundante disponibilidad de fondos externos. Sin embargo, una vez que los precios del café volvieron a los niveles normales y las divisas se redujeron, sobrevino la crisis cambiaria. Para ese entonces gobernaba el presidente Rodrigo Carazo Odio. En esta época, en Costa Rica existía el mercado negro del dólar y era común ubicar a intermediarios en lo que se conocía como los bajos del radio Monumental.
- 5) Para 1982, con el gobierno de Luis Alberto Monge, se adoptó el sistema cambiario de minidevaluaciones que rigió desde finales de 1983 hasta principios del 2005, a pesar de que en 1992 con la liberalización cambiaria se pretendió modificar la política cambiaria, pero al final las minidevaluaciones se mantuvieron.

En la primera década de esta política es donde el tipo de cambio a precio de venta llega a tener una devaluación, cuya tasa de crecimiento supera el 800 % producto de la crisis vivida a finales de los setenta. A partir de noviembre de 1983, el BCCR establece que el tipo de cambio corresponde al resultado de un mercado libre intercambiarlo. Es decir, el tipo de cambio establecido por esta entidad es solo un tipo de cambio de referencia, a diferencia de lo sucedido antes del año 1983, donde el tipo de cambio establecido era de igual aplicación en todo el sistema bancario nacional. De este momento en adelante, cada banco seguirá el valor dictado por el BCCR, pero podrán cobrar una diferencia en el precio, tanto de compra como de venta.

A pesar de la depreciación sufrida, se debe rescatar que, en este periodo, el sector exportador incrementó su renta, lo cual contribuyó al aumento y diversificación de esta importante actividad. Debido a que los ajustes fueron pequeños, los agentes contaron con bastante certeza para realizar sus planes de ahorro e inversión. No obstante, la implementación de este sistema generó algunos inconvenientes; en primer lugar, su aplicación automática y discrecional estuvo asociada con una tasa de inflación más alta y más variable. La inflación inercial surgió debido a que los distintos agentes económicos, incluyendo empresarios, financistas y los trabajadores, incorporaban anticipadamente el impacto de la devaluación en precios, tasas de interés y salarios.

Aparte de los inconvenientes anteriores propios del sistema de minidevaluaciones, es importante señalar que en términos generales esta política se diseñó de tal forma que los ajustes se realizaron sobre una base absoluta.

- 6) Para 1992, en el gobierno de Rafael Ángel Calderón Fournier y bajo la presidencia de Jorge Guardia en el BCCR, se asume una política de liberalización del tipo de cambio, se abre la cuenta de capitales de la balanza de pagos desde principios de 1992, y se decreta la flotación del colón. Durante el primer año se dan importantes entradas de capital privado, lo que contribuyó a que en 1992 se observara una estabilidad del tipo de cambio, donde solo se presenta una variación que no llega al 1 %, situación totalmente diferente a lo sucedido en la década que precede esta política cambiaria. Pero, como lo indican Lizano y López (2006):

Este intento de flexibilizar el sistema cambiario tuvo corta vida. Pocos meses después de puesto en práctica, el BCCR volvió a tomar las riendas del mercado cambiario, para evitar la continua apreciación nominal del colón que ocurrió durante la vigencia de la flotación cambiaria. Tal como se menciona en Delgado (2000, p. 446) en referencia a las manifestaciones incluidas en un estudio no publicado de Miguel Loría para la Academia de Centroamérica. (2006, p. 102)

Por lo que se considera que para finales de 1992 y hasta el 2006, la política cambiaria retornó en la práctica a un sistema de minidevaluaciones, solo que con un sistema cambiario abierto en las cuentas de capitales.

En vista de los inconvenientes, las autoridades económicas propiciaron la adopción de un régimen de mayor libertad cambiaria. Este sistema se vio facilitado por la prevalencia de una serie de condiciones internas y externas muy favorables:

- a) El país había logrado un adecuado manejo de la política fiscal y monetaria.
- b) El tipo de cambio real había experimentado una importante depreciación.
- c) La actividad turística crecía aceleradamente, lo cual era una fuente de divisas.
- d) Los déficits se habían reducido considerablemente.
- e) El BCCR experimentó una acumulación de reservas internacionales.
- f) Las tasas externas de interés experimentaron una significativa disminución.
- g) La recesión de algunas economías industrializadas y las políticas de reformas propiciaron una importante entrada de capitales privados.

Durante los meses de mayo a junio de 1992 el tipo de cambio experimentó reiteradas revaluaciones (apreciaciones), como consecuencia de un importante flujo de capital privado y de una menor intervención del BCCR en el mercado cambiario, por lo que pasa de un tipo de cambio de venta de ₡138,50 el 1 de marzo, a ₡129,41 el 24 de junio de 1992.

- 1) El 17 de octubre del año 2006, con el presidente Dr. Oscar Arias Sánchez y bajo la administración en el BCCR del economista Francisco de Paula Gutiérrez, después de más de 22 años de una política de minidevaluaciones, se cambia la política cambiaria a una de bandas cambiarias. En ella se establecía un

valor máximo de compra y venta del dólar y un valor piso, valores dentro de los cuales los diferentes bancos del país podían definir el tipo de cambio. Este sistema cambiario se manejó por más de 8 años, periodo donde la banda cambiaria llegó a contar con valores entre ₡866 como techo y ₡500 como piso (Delgado-Montoya, 2015, párr. 6).

- 2) En enero de 2015 el BCCR toma la decisión de pasar de un régimen de bandas cambiarias al régimen que rige hasta la actualidad, que es un sistema de flotación administrada. Este periodo inicia con un tipo de cambio de ₡545,53 la venta, y el 7 de noviembre de 2018 llegó a presentarse el valor más alto en la historia del precio del dólar, ₡631,30 hasta cerrar en diciembre de 2020 con un tipo de cambio de referencia de ₡617,30 la venta, que para los primeros meses de enero y febrero de 2021 se mantiene en el mercado.

## EVOLUCIÓN DEL TIPO DE CAMBIO

En este proceso de evolución se presentará la historia, en números, del tipo de cambio. Todos los datos son obtenidos del BCCR. Para los primeros años de la historia cambiaria de Costa Rica, ya que se contaba con un mercado oficial y uno libre, estos se proporcionarán en series para los dos mercados. Del año 1970 a 1982 se expondrá el tipo de cambio solo del mercado intercambiario con las observaciones del tipo de cambio que se aplicaba. Además, se presentarán las principales variaciones de 1970 a 1982 por semana.

**Tabla 1. Tipo de cambio mercado oficial de Costa Rica. Precio de compra, precio de venta y tasa de crecimiento en el periodo 1945-1982**

FECHA	COMPRA	VENTA
De 1945 a 1946	5,61	5,62
De 1947 al 31-08-61	5,60	5,67
Del 01-09-61 al 19-03-73	6,62	6,65
Del 20-03-73 al 23-04-74	6,62	6,68
Del 24-04-74 al 09-12-81	8,54	8,60
Del 10-12-81 al 10-06-82	20,00	20,16
Del 11-06-82 al 17-09-82	20,00	20,25
18-09-82	20,00	20,30

Fuente: BCCR. El artículo 20 de la Ley 6999 del 16 de setiembre de 1985, prohíbe al BCCR operar en este mercado. Solamente se hace la excepción para que lo haga con los estudiantes que estaban registrados en el BCCR hasta el 10 de diciembre de 1981, según lo dispuesto en las normas 50 y 51 del Presupuesto Extraordinario de la República, publicadas en el Alcance n.o 22 de La Gaceta n.o 247 del 26 de diciembre de 1985.

**Tabla 2. Tipo de cambio mercado oficial de Costa Rica. Precio de compra, precio de venta y tasa de crecimiento en el periodo 1966-1979**

FECHA	COMPRA	VENTA
De 1953 al 31-12-66	6,62	6,65
Del 25-04-67 al 22-10-67	7,00	7,03
Del 23-10-67 al 01-11-67	7,55	7,58
Del 02-11-67 al 18-02-68	7,77	7,80
Del 19-02-68 al 03-03-68	8,07	8,10
Del 04-03-68 al 18-04-68	8,22	8,25
Del 19-04-68 al 24-04-68	8,12	8,15
Del 25-04-68 al 30-04-68	8,07	8,10
Del 02-05-68 al 04-05-68	7,97	8,00
Del 06-05-68 al 13-05-68	7,92	7,95
Del 14-05-68 al 30-05-68	7,87	7,90
Del 31-05-68 al 25-06-68	7,82	7,85
Del 26-05-68 al 11-07-68	7,77	7,80
Del 12-07-68 al 19-07-68	7,72	7,75
Del 20-07-68 al 30-07-68	7,67	7,70
Del 31-07-68 al 15-08-68	7,57	7,60
Del 18-08-68 al 25-08-68	7,52	7,55
Del 26-08-68 al 10-09-68	7,42	7,45
Del 11-09-68 al 29-09-68	7,37	7,40
Del 30-09-68 al 28-01-69	7,32	7,35
Del 29-01-69 al 11-02-69	7,27	7,30
Del 12-02-69 al 17-04-69	7,07	7,10
Del 18-04-69 al 14-12-69	6,92	6,95
Del 15-12-69 al 23-12-69	6,62	6,95
Del 24-12-69 al 19-06-71	6,62	6,65
Del 23-06-71 al 01-07-71	7,50	7,53
Del 02-07-71 al 12-07-71	7,50	7,53
Del 16-07-71 al 18-08-71	8,57	8,60
Del 19-08-71 al 18-09-71	8,57	8,60
Del 20-09-71 al 11-10-71	7,87	7,90
Del 11-10-71 al 19-10-71	8,22	8,25
Del 20-10-71 al 19-03-73	8,57	8,60
Del 20-03-73 a 1979	8,54	8,60

REFERENCIA	FECHA	COMPRA	VENTA
	09-10-80	12,20	12,30
	13-10-80	11,56	11,62
	14-10-80	12,00	12,06
	15-10-80	11,84	11,90
	16-10-80	11,74	11,80
	Del 17-10-80 al 20-10-80	11,54	11,60
	21-10-80	11,44	11,50
	22-10-80	11,29	11,44
	23-10-80	11,34	11,40
	Del 24-10-80 al 27-10-80	11,30	11,36
	28-10-80	11,20	11,26
	Del 29-10-80 al 31-10-80	11,18	11,24
	03-11-80	11,20	11,26
	04-11-80	11,24	11,30
	05-11-80	11,20	11,26
	06-11-80	11,21	11,27
	07-11-80	11,27	11,33
	10-11-80	11,44	11,50
	11-11-80	11,60	11,66
	12-11-80	12,00	12,06
	13-11-80	11,96	12,02
	14-11-80	11,92	11,98
	17-11-80	11,87	11,93
	Del 18-11-80 al 19-11-80	11,92	11,98
	20-11-80	11,97	12,03
	21-11-80	11,98	12,04
	24-11-80	12,00	12,06
	25-11-80	12,09	12,15
	26-11-80	12,64	12,70
	27-11-80	13,09	13,15
	28-11-80	13,30	13,36
	01-12-80	13,94	14,00
	02-12-80	15,64	15,70
	03-12-80	14,50	14,56
En la tarde	Del 03-12-80 al 09-12-80	13,50	13,56
En la tarde	10-12-80	13,65	13,71
En la tarde	Del 10-12-80 al 11-12-80	13,75	13,81
En la tarde	Del 11-12-80 al 12-12-80	14,00	14,06
En la tarde	Del 12-12-80 al 15-12-80	14,25	14,31
En la tarde	Del 15-12-80 al 16-11-80	14,69	14,75
En la tarde	Del 16-12-80 al 17-12-80	14,75	14,81
En la tarde	Del 17-12-80 al 18-12-80	14,65	14,71

En la tarde	Del 18-12-80 al 23-12-80	14,50	14,56
	Del 23-12-80 al 26-12-80	14,40	14,46
	Del 26-12-80 al 06-01-81	14,25	14,31
	07-01-81	14,00	14,06
	08-01-81	13,95	14,01
	09-01-81	13,75	13,81
	12-01-81	13,50	13,56
después 12:30 pm	13-01-81	13,30	13,36
	14-01-81 (hasta 12:30 pm)	13,20	13,26
	del 14-01-81 al 15-01-81	13,15	13,21
	15-01-81 (desp. de 1 pm)	12,94	13,00
	del 16-01-81 al 19-01-81	12,92	12,98
	20-01-81	12,82	12,88
	21-01-81	12,80	12,86
	22-01-81	12,75	12,81
	23-01-81	12,73	12,79
	del 26-01-81 al 27-01-81	12,70	12,76
	del 28-01-81 al 29-01-81	12,65	12,71
	del 30-01-81 al 02-02-81	12,64	12,70
	del 03-02-81 al 12-02-81	12,60	12,66
	12-02-81 (des. 12:15 pm)	14,00	14,06
	del 13-02-81 al 17-02-81	13,57	13,63
	del 17-02-81 al 18-02-81	13,81	13,87
	del 18-02-81 al 19-02-81	13,87	13,93
	del 19-02-81 al 20-02-81	13,93	13,99
	del 20-02-81 al 23-02-81	14,50	14,56
	del 23-02-81 al 24-02-81	15,50	15,56
	25-02-81	16,05	16,11
	del 25-02-81 al 26-02-81	17,04	17,10
	del 26-02-81 al 27-02-81	17,00	17,06
	del 27-02-81 al 04-03-81	16,75	16,81
	05-03-81	16,70	16,76
	05-03-81	16,89	16,95
(A) —	06-03-81	16,84	16,90
	del 09-03-81 al 17-03-81	15,00	15,06
	17-03-81	15,00	17,42
	18-03-81	15,00	17,50
	20-03-81	15,00	17,55
	23-03-81	15,00	17,52
	24-03-81	15,00	17,38
	25-03-81	15,00	17,04
	26-03-81	15,00	16,91
	27-03-81	15,00	17,12

	30-03-81	15,00	17,28
	31-03-81	15,00	17,48
	01-04-81	15,00	17,55
	02-04-81	15,00	17,26
	del 03-04-81 al 06-04-81	15,00	16,99
	07-04-81	15,00	17,22
	08-04-81	15,00	17,60
	09-04-81	15,00	17,91
	10-04-81	15,00	18,01
	13-04-81	15,00	18,47
	del 14-04-81 al 20-04-81	15,00	18,56
	21-04-81	15,00	18,58
	22-04-81	15,00	18,99
	23-04-81	15,00	19,96
	del 24-04-81 al 27-04-81	20,98	21,04
	27-04-81	20,92	20,98
	del 27-04-81 al 28-04-81	20,50	20,56
	del 28-04-81 al 29-04-81	20,20	20,26
	29-04-81	19,10	19,16
	30-04-81	18,85	18,91
	30-04-81	18,70	18,76
	04-05-81	18,50	18,56
	del 04-05-81 al 06-05-81	18,40	18,46
	del 06-05-81 al 07-05-81	18,25	18,31
	del 07-05-81 al 08-05-81	18,10	18,16
	08-05-81	18,00	18,06
	11-05-81	17,90	17,96
	12-05-81	17,75	17,81
	13-05-81	17,70	17,76
	14-05-81	17,60	17,66
	15-05-81	17,50	17,56
	18-05-81	17,00	17,06
	19-05-81	16,50	16,56
	20-05-81	16,00	16,06
	21-05-81	15,50	15,56
	22-05-81	15,25	15,31
	25-05-81	15,20	15,26
	26-05-81	15,19	15,25
	del 27-05-81 al 29-05-81	15,18	15,24
	del 01-06-81 al 12-06-81	17,00	17,06
	12-06-81	19,10	19,16
	del 15-06-81 al 23-06-81	20,00	20,06

(A)–	del 24-06-81 al 30-06-81	19,00	19,06
(B)–	del 01-07-81 al 07-07-81	18,94	19,00
	del 08-07-81 al 07-10-81	18,84	18,90
	del 08-10-81 al 15-10-81	30,00	30,06
	del 16-10-81 al 20-10-81	32,00	32,06
	del 23-10-81 al 02-11-81	38,00	38,18
	del 03-11-81 al 05-11-81	37,50	37,68
	del 06-11-81 al 10-11-81	36,80	36,98
	del 11-11-81 al 27-11-81	36,00	36,18
	del 30-11-81 al 17-12-81	35,80	35,98
	del 18-12-81 al 08-01-82	36,00	36,18
	del 11-01-82 al 14-01-82	35,70	35,88
	del 15-01-82 al 27-01-82	36,20	36,38
	del 28-01-82 al 19-02-82	37,00	37,18
	del 22-02-82 al 18-03-82	37,20	37,38
(C)–	del 22-03-82 al 11-06-82	38,00	38,18
	del 12-06-82 al 28-08-82	38,00	38,25
(D)–	del 30-08-82 al 14-08-82	40,00	40,25
(E)–	del 15-09-82 al 01-12-82	40,00	40,30
	del 02-12-82 al 27-06-83	40,00	40,50
	del 28-06-83 al 22-09-83	41,00	41,50
	del 23-09-83 al 10-11-83	41,25	41,75

Fuente: Banco de Costa Rica, documento facilitado por el BCCR. Para esta época, si bien se manejaba un tipo de cambio en el mercado, para los efectos oficiales se mantenía la venta de dólares a precio oficial. Se manejaba una doble realidad en esta materia. El precio del dólar en el mercado negro podía ser muy variado.

Para 1979 el tipo de cambio cierra en el mercado oficial en ₡8,60, a diciembre de 1980 alcanza ₡14,31 con un incremento del 66,40 % en el tipo de cambio. En un solo año, de 1980 a diciembre de 1981, el dólar sube a ₡36,18, lo que representó un aumento porcentual de 152 %. Este aumento de 219,23 % en el tipo de cambio generó en el poder adquisitivo una crisis sin precedentes en el país, situación que persiste hasta 1983, año en que el BCCR establece el mercado libre intercambiario, pero solo de referencia, lo cual para los primeros dos años logra controlar un poco la velocidad de la devaluación del colón.

**Tabla 3. Tipo de cambio nominal de Costa Rica.  
Precio de compra, precio de venta y tasa de crecimiento en el periodo 1970-2020.  
Promedio anual 1960-2020**

AÑO	PRECIO Compra	PRECIO Venta	DIFERENCIA PRECIO V-C	VENTA CAMBIO %
1970	6,62	6,65	0,03	
1971	8,57	8,60	0,03	29,32
1972	8,57	8,60	0,03	0,00
1973	8,54	8,60	0,06	0,00
1974	8,54	8,60	0,06	0,00
1975	8,54	8,60	0,06	0,00
1976	8,54	8,60	0,06	0,00
1977	8,54	8,60	0,06	0,00
1978	8,54	8,60	0,06	0,00
1979	8,54	8,60	0,06	0,00
1980	14,25	14,31	0,06	66,40
1981	36,00	36,18	0,18	152,83
1982	40,00	40,50	0,50	11,94
1983	43,15	43,65	0,50	7,78
1984	47,50	47,50	0,00	8,82
1985	53,45	53,95	0,50	13,58
1986	58,50	59,25	0,75	9,82
1987	68,75	69,75	1,00	17,72
1988	79,00	80,00	1,00	14,70
1989	83,85	84,85	1,00	6,06
1990	102,55	104,55	2,00	23,22
1991	134,10	136,75	2,65	30,80
1992	136,74	138,07	1,33	0,97
1993	150,61	152,17	1,56	10,21
1994	164,51	165,63	1,12	8,85
1995	194,43	195,37	0,94	17,96
1996	219,91	220,31	0,40	12,77
1997	244,04	244,53	0,49	10,99
1998	271,19	271,65	0,46	11,09
1999	297,96	298,41	0,45	9,85
2000	317,74	318,30	0,56	6,67
2001	341,40	341,94	0,54	7,43
2002	378,39	379,05	0,66	10,85
2003	418,04	419,01	0,97	10,54
2004	457,58	459,64	2,06	9,70
2005	495,65	497,71	2,06	8,28
2006	515,84	519,95	4,11	4,47



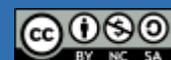
2007	495,23	500,97	5,74	-3,65
2008	550,08	560,65	10,57	11,91
2009	558,67	571,81	13,14	1,99
2010	507,85	518,09	10,24	-9,39
2011	505,35	518,33	12,98	0,05
2012	502,07	514,32	12,25	-0,77
2013	495,01	507,80	12,79	-1,27
2014	533,31	545,53	12,22	7,43
2015	531,94	544,87	12,93	-0,12
2016	548,18	561,10	12,92	2,98
2017	566,42	572,56	6,14	2,04
2018	604,39	611,75	7,36	6,84
2019	567,06	573,36	6,30	-6,28
2020	610,53	617,30	6,77	7,66

Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir de los datos del BCCR.

**Tabla 4. Tipo de cambio mercado interbancario de Costa Rica. Precio de venta y promedio anual en el periodo 1983-2020**

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
ENERO	43.25	43.65	48.45	53.95	59.55	73.95	80.15	85.45	109.05	138.65	139.12	153.12	167.68	197.73	222.41	246.40	274.06	299.95	320.02
FEBRERO	45.10	43.65	48.70	54.70	60.10	74.20	80.45	85.90	112.55	138.50	138.89	153.62	169.99	199.76	224.48	248.32	276.44	301.49	321.57
MARZO	44.75	43.65	49.25	54.95	60.50	74.50	80.75	86.95	116.50	133.64	138.85	154.53	172.72	201.92	226.47	250.32	279.08	303.55	323.45
ABRIL	44.65	43.65	49.50	55.25	61.25	75.05	81.05	87.55	119.50	131.25	138.85	154.85	174.91	203.71	228.60	252.35	281.50	304.92	324.75
MAYO	44.60	44.00	49.85	55.85	62.05	75.75	81.35	89.95	122.25	128.68	138.83	155.71	177.52	205.90	230.87	254.44	283.99	306.63	326.54
JUNIO	43.60	44.25	50.60	56.45	62.75	76.45	81.65	91.30	124.75	134.98	141.18	156.60	179.99	207.70	232.94	256.85	286.64	308.42	328.35
JULIO	43.60	44.25	51.10	56.65	63.35	77.10	82.45	92.65	127.25	134.83	142.81	157.87	182.36	209.80	235.05	259.40	288.97	310.00	330.38
AGOSTO	43.60	44.25	51.95	57.05	64.10	77.45	82.90	94.90	129.75	136.00	144.61	159.12	184.94	213.88	236.91	261.69	290.78	311.74	332.36
SEPTIEMBRE	42.60	45.00	52.45	57.65	65.35	78.47	83.35	96.70	131.55	136.56	146.50	160.51	187.62	213.94	238.77	264.07	292.62	313.35	334.58
OCTUBRE	42.60	48.00	52.95	57.95	66.75	79.00	83.65	99.05	133.55	137.04	148.39	162.27	190.16	216.23	240.77	266.67	294.55	315.01	336.96
NOVIEMBRE	43.65	48.00	53.30	58.65	67.75	79.65	84.25	101.80	135.15	137.53	150.35	164.07	193.06	218.41	242.70	269.17	296.42	316.79	339.56
DICIEMBRE	43.65	47.50	53.95	59.25	69.75	80.00	84.85	104.55	136.75	138.07	152.17	165.63	195.37	220.31	244.53	271.65	298.41	318.30	341.94
PROMEDIO ANUAL	43.97	44.99	51.00	56.53	63.60	76.80	82.24	93.06	124.88	135.48	143.38	158.16	181.36	208.94	233.71	258.44	286.96	309.18	330.04
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
ENERO	344.79	382.33	422.18	462.48	500.65	521.05	499.74	565.16	565.11	510.69	514.91	507.00	519.63	543.08	544.57	561.42	572.27	614.17	573.36
FEBRERO	347.57	385.55	425.21	465.83	503.17	520.97	499.29	570.13	558.45	507.61	516.20	506.84	553.54	540.58	542.20	568.16	572.82	630.72	571.54
MARZO	350.39	388.83	428.50	468.87	506.03	520.69	497.67	568.35	528.78	506.16	513.58	504.65	553.63	539.08	542.23	567.34	569.31	602.36	587.37
ABRIL	353.46	391.99	431.58	472.07	508.66	520.68	497.21	577.97	516.04	506.44	509.59	504.46	556.16	538.11	544.03	570.72	568.31	599.09	571.46
MAYO	356.74	395.44	434.73	475.19	511.30	520.76	522.88	581.63	545.72	511.15	507.30	504.20	559.88	542.46	544.26	580.12	568.77	590.54	576.93
JUNIO	359.79	398.59	438.01	478.68	514.06	520.72	522.76	579.91	540.24	509.57	503.85	504.53	548.66	540.97	554.20	579.87	570.08	583.64	583.49
JULIO	363.08	402.22	441.35	481.54	516.70	520.68	556.64	590.94	522.71	510.88	505.98	504.44	543.93	540.80	556.16	575.17	570.07	573.46	588.33
AGOSTO	366.11	405.55	444.90	484.74	519.34	520.75	557.35	593.74	514.28	516.77	503.22	510.03	545.33	541.46	558.64	577.42	575.67	575.16	598.00
SEPTIEMBRE	369.12	408.88	448.32	487.96	522.06	520.74	559.26	591.73	512.94	519.87	503.31	505.57	545.52	541.04	558.80	574.13	585.80	583.88	606.68
OCTUBRE	372.54	412.54	451.87	490.93	519.63	521.16	560.51	586.31	519.18	521.11	503.24	506.02	544.71	540.43	560.18	572.11	630.74	585.39	612.92
NOVIEMBRE	375.88	415.97	455.58	494.29	518.78	502.25	536.75	559.27	512.20	512.10	503.17	505.13	541.19	538.71	558.40	568.56	601.10	565.89	608.79
DICIEMBRE	379.05	419.01	459.64	497.71	519.95	500.97	560.85	571.81	518.09	518.33	514.32	507.80	545.53	544.87	561.10	572.56	611.75	576.49	617.30
PROMEDIO ANUAL	361.54	400.58	440.16	480.07	513.36	517.62	530.91	578.08	529.48	512.56	508.22	505.89	546.48	540.97	552.06	572.30	581.56	588.40	591.35

Fuente: BCCR.



**Tabla 5. Tipo de cambio de Costa Rica. Precio de compra, precio de venta, aumentos de cada 50 colones y n.º de días en ese valor**

Fecha	Compra	Venta	Nº días
6-jun-85	49,75	50,25	1 981
8-nov-90	98,40	100,15	1 112
24-nov-93	148,58	150,01	829
2-mar-96	199,27	200,06	754
26-mar-98	249,60	250,07	677
1-feb-00	299,56	300,07	784
26-mar-02	349,54	350,11	472
11-jul-03	399,46	400,02	460
13-oct-04	448,36	450,07	468
24-ene-06	498,05	500,02	3 800
20-jun-16	537,14	549,74	858
26-oct-18	594,80	599,40	

Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir de los datos del BCCR.

Se puede evidenciar que el valor que más se sostiene en el mercado fue el tipo de cambio alrededor de los ₡500,00, durante más de 10 años o 3.800 días, con una política económica de libertad cambiaria.

**Tabla 6. Tipo de cambio de Costa Rica. Mayor diferencia entre el precio de compra y el precio de venta, 2014**

Fecha	Compra	Venta	Dif. V-C
17-mar-14	531,86	549,87	18,01
14-mar-14	541,20	558,73	17,53
18-mar-14	531,88	548,96	17,08
19-mar-14	532,99	548,80	15,81
20-mar-14	533,05	548,77	15,72
17-abr-14	535,18	550,88	15,70
18-abr-14	535,18	550,88	15,70
19-abr-14	535,18	550,88	15,70
21-abr-14	535,18	550,88	15,70
20-abr-14	535,18	550,80	15,62

Fuente: BNCR, cálculos propios.

En el año 2014 se presentan las mayores diferencias entre el tipo de cambio de compra y de venta. El 17 de marzo de 2014 fue el día donde se presentó la mayor diferencia histórica de ₡18,01.

## CONCLUSIONES

El tipo de cambio en los años sesenta se establece como un tipo de cambio fijo, producto de las negociaciones en Bretton Woods y los acuerdos con organismos como el FMI y la CEPAL, con la finalidad de mantener la competitividad en la región. En tanto el Gobierno no interfiriera directamente en la política cambiaria, a finales de los años setenta se contaba con un tipo de cambio oficial para trámite de transacciones, un tipo de cambio bancario y un tipo de cambio en el mercado negro.

A lo largo de estos sesenta años se pueden distinguir en el país ocho etapas en las que se pueden evidenciar políticas cambiarias definidas, dentro de las que se presentaron: desde el tipo de cambio fijo, las minidevaluaciones, sistema de bandas, un modelo de liberalización cambiaria, donde se vuelve fundamental la intervención del Gobierno mediante el manejo de las reservas monetarias internacionales para mantener estable el tipo de cambio, hasta llegar al sistema actual que corresponde a un sistema de flotación administrada.

A finales de los años setenta el país sufre la peor crisis cambiaria de su historia, el tipo de cambio varía de ₡8,60 en 1979 a ₡12,30 en 1980. Para el 15 de agosto de 1982 el dólar alcanza el monto de ₡40,30, para alcanzar en enero de 1983 el valor de ₡45,25. De manera que, en un periodo de 3 años, se tiene un incremento del 426 %. Además, se cierra la década del ochenta con un tipo de cambio de ₡104,55, para un incremento en una década de un 1115 %, mientras que en la década del 2006 al 2016, el incremento tendió de 0 % a un 10 % como máximo. Este es el periodo en el que Costa Rica presenta por más tiempo la estabilidad del tipo de cambio, con un valor alrededor de los ₡500,00, lo cual representa que en el periodo de política de bandas cambiarias no se alcanza una diferencia de más menos 10 %.

Es a partir de 2014, a finales de la política de bandas cambiarias, que se presentan las mayores diferencias entre el precio de compra y venta del dólar en Costa Rica. El 17 de marzo de 2014 fue cuando se presentó la mayor diferencia histórica de ₡18,01.

En el 2015 con el establecimiento oficial del sistema de flotación administrada, si bien el tipo de cambio se ajusta por el libre juego de oferta y demanda, la intervención del Gobierno respaldado en las reservas monetarias internacionales, hace que el 7 de noviembre de 2018 en Costa Rica se alcance el monto más alto en el tipo de cambio del dólar, con un valor de ₡631,30. Razón por la cual debe intervenir el BCCR, con lo que en 10 días, se logra controlar el tipo de cambio a ₡604,10 para el 17 de noviembre de 2018.

La pandemia del COVID-19, al afectar la economía mundial, permite que se mantenga el balance entre la oferta y la demanda del tipo de cambio. Si bien el sector turístico llegó a generar pocos ingresos en el 2020, otros sectores mantuvieron la producción, lo cual permitió que el tipo de cambio se mantuviese alrededor de los ₡600,00 durante el 2020.

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# Gestión actual del talento humano: contexto universitario

## Current management of human talent: university context

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### RESUMEN

Este artículo académico es el resultado del análisis y evaluación de lo que representa la gestión del talento humano en el entorno actual. Su objetivo es plantear la nueva visión de la gestión, a partir de una revisión bibliográfica sobre la administración de recursos humanos y su evolución. Se evalúa la importancia de su transformación, desde la perspectiva de los avances organizacionales, y se concluye que se requiere un cambio paradigmático en la gestión del talento humano, con miras a incrementar el aporte estratégico que puede brindar en la consecución de objetivos y metas organizacionales.

### ABSTRACT

This work is the result of the analysis and evaluation of what human talent management represents in the current work environment. The main goal is to set a new way of viewing management, starting from a bibliographic review of human resources management, and its evolution through time, highlighting the importance of its transformation, going through organizational progress, and concluding that a change in human talent management its required, in order to increase the strategical support, it can bring to organizational goals achievement.

### RÉSUMÉ :

Cet article est le résultat de l'analyse et de l'évaluation de ce que représente la gestion des talents humains dans l'environnement actuel. Son objectif est de formuler la nouvelle vision de la gestion, à partir d'une revue bibliographique sur l'administration des ressources humaines et son évolution. Il évalue l'importance de sa transformation du point de vue des progrès organisationnels et conclut qu'un changement de paradigme dans la gestion des talents humains est nécessaire, en vue d'accroître sa contribution stratégique à la réalisation des buts et objectifs de l'organisation.

### RESUMO:

Este artigo acadêmico é o resultado da análise e avaliação do que a gestão do talento humano representa no ambiente atual. Seu objetivo é plantear a nova visão da gestão, a partir de uma revisão bibliográfica sobre a administração de recursos humanos e sua evolução. Avalia-se a importância da sua transformação, da perspectiva dos avanços organizacionais, e conclui-se que é necessária uma mudança paradigmática na gestão do talento humano, com vista a aumentar a contribuição estratégica que pode proporcionar na consecução dos objetivos e objetivos organizacionais.

### PALABRAS CLAVE:

GESTIÓN DE TALENTO HUMANO, ADMINISTRACIÓN DE RECURSOS HUMANOS, TRANSFORMACIÓN DE LA GESTIÓN, ADMINISTRACIÓN DE TALENTOS, ESTRUCTURA ORGANIZACIONAL, TENDENCIAS DE LA FUERZA LABORAL

### KEY WORDS:

HUMAN TALENT MANAGEMENT, HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT, TRANSFORMATION MANAGEMENT, TALENT MANAGEMENT, ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, WORKFORCE TENDENCIES.

### MOTS-CLÉS :

GESTION DES TALENTS HUMAINS, GESTION DES RESSOURCES HUMAINES, TRANSFORMATION DE LA GESTION, GESTION DES TALENTS, STRUCTURE ORGANISATIONNELLE, TENDANCES DE LA MAIN-D'ŒUVRE

### PALAVRAS-CHAVE:

GESTÃO DO TALENTOS HUMANOS, ADMINISTRAÇÃO DE RECURSOS HUMANOS, TRANSFORMAÇÃO DA GESTÃO, ADMINISTRAÇÃO DE TALENTOS, ESTRUTURA ORGANIZACIONAL, TENDÊNCIAS DA FORÇA DO TRABALHO



## INTRODUCCIÓN

El siglo XXI plantea grandes retos para las organizaciones. Aspectos como la escasez de recursos, la globalización, la diversidad, los avances tecnológicos, la fuerte competencia, la exigencia cada vez mayor por la implementación de estándares de calidad y excelencia en la producción de bienes y servicios, el acceso a la información, la difusión masiva, entre otros, obligan a replantear los procesos laborales, con miras a incorporar acciones que permitan dar una respuesta ágil y oportuna a lo que la sociedad espera de la gestión.

Las personas, otrora vistas como apéndice de los procesos laborales detrás de maquinaria o equipos, en la actualidad ocupan un rol esencial en la consecución de los objetivos y metas, y por ende son corresponsables del éxito organizacional. Es por ello que los procesos inherentes a la administración del talento han tenido que transformarse, con el fin de poder adaptarse a las nuevas condiciones que el entorno exige. La vieja estructura de departamentos de recursos humanos, orientados principalmente al trámite de contrataciones, pago de nómina y seguridad laboral, ha tenido que abrir paso a una nueva forma de gestionar el talento, ocupando una posición más estratégica, como acompañamiento y asesoría para promover una eficaz toma de decisiones organizacional.

Chiavenato (2011) plantea que todos estos cambios del entorno generan grandes retos para el logro de una gestión efectiva de las personas. No obstante, presenta como el primer gran desafío lo siguiente:

Antes el área de RH se caracterizaba por definir políticas en la que las personas recibían un trato genérico y estandarizado. Las técnicas de RH consideraban homogéneas a todas las personas. Hoy en día, cada vez se toman más en cuenta estas particularidades: la administración de Recursos Humanos hace hincapié en las diferencias individuales y en la diversidad en las organizaciones. La razón es sencilla cuanto mayor es la diferencia entre las personas, tanto mayor su potencial e innovación. (p. 39)

En este nuevo rol que las personas ocupan dentro de las organizaciones, la comprensión de los factores que orientan su accionar hacia la consecución de los resultados esperados adquiere mucha importancia. Bajo esta premisa, para lograr el éxito organizacional, como condición *sine qua non*, se debe asumir que las personas son el centro de la gestión y tener conciencia de la importancia de sus capacidades. Chiavenato (2020) define el talento como las capacidades, habilidades y otras características que deben ser validadas y compensadas continuamente. No obstante, advierte sobre la importancia de su abordaje integral al indicar que: “no se puede abordar el talento de forma aislada como un sistema cerrado. Solo no llega lejos, pues debe existir y coexistir en un contexto que le permita libertad, autonomía y cobertura para poder expandirse” (p. 41).

Es por ello que, adicionalmente a esta visión de persona como motor de éxito, existen otros factores que intervienen en el ámbito organizacional que de igual forma deben ser evaluados y alineados, de modo que se pueda asegurar el cumplimiento de los objetivos propuestos.

Este artículo tiene como objetivo plantear los cambios esenciales que debe realizar la gestión universitaria de talento humano, con el fin de adaptar su accionar a los cambios que el entorno actual plantea, y colaborar como socio estratégico para la consecución del éxito en los procesos académicos.

## DE ADMINISTRAR PERSONAL A GESTIONAR TALENTOS

La necesidad de administrar los procesos inherentes a las personas dentro de las organizaciones nace en la primera mitad del siglo XX, producto del creciente auge de la industrialización. Se tenía la idea de que el éxito organizacional estaba centrado en las máquinas, además se consideraba a las personas como parte del proceso de producción y, por ende, era necesario establecer políticas orientadas a resguardar el lugar de trabajo, con el fin de evitar accidentes laborales. Ariza-Montes *et al.* (2004) establecen esta época como “etapa administrativa” de la gestión de talento humano, por cuanto su función general estaba orientada hacia la elaboración de contratos de trabajo, control de jornadas y aseguramientos de riesgos.

En la segunda mitad del siglo XX se inicia una etapa de cambios vertiginosos en el mundo organizacional. La incorporación de la tecnología en los procesos laborales modificó por completo no solo la forma de generar resultados, sino que transformó la manera en que se realizan las tareas en cada uno de los puestos de trabajo. Dolan *et al.* (2010) indican que uno de los efectos directos del ingreso de la tecnología a la actividad laboral fue la incorporación de estructuras cada vez menos jerarquizadas, dada la necesidad de generar un agrupamiento de la actividad por procesos.

Otro de los cambios más grandes que se dieron en esta época fue la incorporación de la mujer a la educación y al trabajo. Werther *et al.* (2019) señalan que esto se produjo debido a dos factores esenciales: “la extensión de la educación general y el incremento de la demanda de personas que necesitaban integrarse a la economía moderna” (p. 32). Se crean en este período los departamentos de recursos humanos, para generar procesos de diseño de puestos, reclutamiento, selección, capacitación y remuneración, lo cual produce una mayor especialización en el área. Si bien las personas son vistas como parte importante del engranaje empresarial, la inversión estaba centrada en la tecnología como factor esencial del éxito organizacional.

El siglo XXI plantea el gran reto para la administración de talento humano: *la gestión del conocimiento*. Fernández-López (2005) define el conocimiento como: “El conjunto de información desarrollado en el contexto de una experiencia y transformado a su vez en otra experiencia” (p. 205). El desafío que esto representa está relacionado con “redefinir el concepto de aprendizaje corporativo para convertirlo en un proceso que comprende desde el desarrollo hasta la aplicación y explotación del conocimiento necesario en la cobertura de un objetivo concreto” (p. 207).

Dentro de este contexto, las funciones esenciales del talento humano deberán estar dirigidas a promover el desarrollo profesional y personal, generar espacios de aprendizaje y definir puestos de trabajo orientados hacia la creatividad e innovación, que permitan a las personas desplegar todo su potencial para obtener los resultados que se esperan. Chiavenato (2020) indica que:

Es el turno del conocimiento, de las habilidades y de las competencias esenciales del capital humano y del capital intelectual. El conocimiento se ha convertido en el factor básico y el desafío mayor será estimular la productividad del conocimiento para generar las competencias. Lograr que el conocimiento sea útil y productivo, pasó a ser la mayor responsabilidad de los gerentes. Y el trabajo manual fue sustituido por el trabajo mental y las máquinas inteligentes. El conocimiento se tornó completo y virtual, y hoy es la moneda más valiosa del planeta. Puede estar en documentos, registros, patentes, proyectos, bancos de datos, pero antes debe estar en el cerebro de las personas en forma de habilidades, actitudes y competencias para después aplicarlas. Estamos hablando de talento humano. (p. 31)

Sin embargo, esta visión de lo que representa la administración de recursos humanos se da hasta que se define a la persona como fuente de éxito organizacional. Ariza-Montes *et al.* (2004) sintetizan en la tabla 1 la transición que ha sufrido la gestión de talento humano:

**Tabla 1. Evolución de la función de los recursos humanos en el siglo XX**

Etapa administrativa		Etapa psicotécnica	Etapa laboral	Etapa de RRHH	
ORGANIZACIÓN	Finalidad	CANTIDAD	EFICIENCIA	REDUCCIÓN DE COSTES	CALIDAD
		Mantenimiento de la producción		Optimización de resultados	Mejora continua de procesos
				TÁCTICA	
	Posición y relevancia administrativa	OPERATIVA	TÁCTICA	Director funcional	ESTRATÉGICA
		Dependencia del director administrativo	Directivo de segundo nivel	Derecho del trabajo	Staff del director general o directivo de primer nivel
	Conocimientos relevantes	Económico-financieros y legales	Psicología		Planificación estratégica
ENTORNO	Contexto económico	Estabilidad	Expansión	Crisis	Competitividad elevada
	Cualificación del personal operativo	Escasa (dirección de operarios)	Media moderada (dirección de empleados)	Profesionalización media moderada (dirección de empleados)	Elevada profesionalización
	Valores culturales básicos	Producción cuantitativa, fidelidad, conformidad cumplimiento, disciplina	Racionalización motivación, eficiencia, medición de resultados	Movilidad, flexibilidad	Desarrollo, participación, aprendizaje continuo, creatividad

Fuente: Ariza-Montes et al. (2004, p. 7).

Al observar en esta figura la evolución que ha tenido la gestión de talento humano, es fácil comprender la importancia que reviste la implementación de políticas orientadas al desarrollo y aprendizaje de las personas, como factor clave para el logro de los objetivos, de las metas y, en resumen, del éxito organizacional.

## LA GESTIÓN DE TALENTO HUMANO EN EL CONTEXTO ACTUAL

Son muchos los retos que se deben enfrentar a la hora de gestionar el talento humano en la actualidad. Dessler y Varela (2017) brindan importantes aportes con respecto a los grandes desafíos a los que se enfrentan las organizaciones para gestionar de manera efectiva su talento, entre ellos:

- a) *Los avances tecnológicos.* Estos no solo generan un cambio en el análisis y diseño de puestos, sino en la forma en que se realiza la captación del talento. Por un lado, los trabajos operativos pueden ser realizados de forma más ágil y exacta con la utilización de la tecnología. Pero, a su vez, esto podría implicar la creación de otras ocupaciones o transformar los puestos actuales en términos de funciones, responsabilidad o requerimientos en cuanto al perfil profesiográfico que se ajusta a las nuevas tendencias.

En este sentido, Werther y Davis (2005), advierten que:

La inteligencia artificial, el manejo de datos y los ambientes virtuales ayudarán a la mayoría de las compañías e instituciones a resolver problemas con mayor rapidez y con mayor calidad. Es evidente que, si la empresa tiene acceso a nuevas tecnologías, el departamento de recursos humanos debe estudiar los posibles efectos que su introducción tendrá sobre su capital humano. (p. 46)

En el documento de MIDEPLAN (2020) se refuerza el cambio que se debe realizar en los perfiles de los puestos, producto del cambio en la tecnología, al mencionar:

Las habilidades transversales o blandas ahora están tomando una necesidad muy fuerte en el sector empleador, las cuales debe ser desarrolladas por parte de las personas en los niveles básicos de la educación. Algunas de estas habilidades son: trabajar con datos y tomar decisiones basadas en datos; resolver problemas complejos; persuadir, inteligencia emocional y enseñar a otros: cognitivas (creatividad, pensamiento matemático) y procedimentales (comunicación, escuchar ideas de otros y pensamiento crítico), así como otras no cognitivas como la capacidad de socialización o la resiliencia, trabajo equipo y liderazgo. (p. 22)

Es imprescindible reconocer el papel preponderante que tienen los departamentos de recursos humanos como facilitadores del cambio, ya que orientan su accionar a lograr que las empresas e instituciones actualicen sus procesos de trabajo y, de esta manera, puedan enfrentar con éxito las nuevas condiciones que el entorno plantea. Por ello, es mediante las personas que se logran los objetivos organizacionales, lo cual se convierte en la oportunidad para la gestión de talento humano de dar un valor estratégico al aporte que brinda a nivel general.

b) *Tendencias de la naturaleza del trabajo.* Al ritmo en que las organizaciones evolucionan, se deben desarrollar los puestos de trabajo. Si bien la dinámica natural empresarial debe ser hacia la transformación, con el fin de adaptarse a los cambios del entorno, el avance, lamentablemente, a veces no ha ido a la misma velocidad. Las razones pueden ir desde la lentitud en la toma de decisiones, hasta impedimentos de tipo financiero. No obstante, a partir del año 2020 esta situación cambió producto de los efectos que tuvo la pandemia por COVID-19 en los procesos de trabajo. Durante este período las empresas se vieron obligadas a implementar el trabajo a distancia, mediado por la tecnología, conocido como teletrabajo.

Sin embargo, en la investigación realizada por Tapasco-Alzate y Girado-García (2020), concluyeron que las grandes resistencias a las que se enfrenta una implementación efectiva del teletrabajo son:

**Tabla 2. Resistencias a la implementación del teletrabajo**

Dificultades	Argumentos	Referencias
Pérdida de control sobre los teletrabajadores	La separación física ocasionada por la realización del trabajo remoto genera dificultades en la coordinación y pérdida de control de los empleados.	Bailey y Kurland (2002); Peters y Dulk (2003); Pérez et al. (2005); Mello (2007); Pérez y Gálvez (2009); Tureken et al. (2011); Dutcher (2012).
Medición del desempeño de los trabajadores	Dado que los métodos de valoración del desempeño se basan en la supervisión presencial, se hace necesario buscar formas alternativas de evaluación que apunten al cumplimiento de los objetivos.	Topi (2004); Dickson y Clear (2006); Mello (2007); Pearce (2009); Burbach y Day (2012).
Impacto sobre el equipo de trabajo	Al no estar el empleado físicamente presente, se afecta la interacción con los colegas y supervisores.	Topi (2004); Pérez et al. (2005); Mello (2007); Pearce (2009); Davis (2012).
Seguridad de la información	Los riesgos de extracción ilegal de información confidencial se incrementan cuando los empleados tienen acceso desde sus residencias a dicha información.	Peters et al. (2004); Pérez et al. (2005); Dickson y Clear (2006); Mello (2007); Kim (2018).
Costos de implementación y acceso a la tecnología	Para el buen desarrollo de un programa de implementación es indispensable disponer de las herramientas tecnológicas apropiadas.	Pérez et al. (2005); Pearce (2009); Valmohammadi (2012).
Selección de empleados aptos	Un buen trabajador no es necesariamente un buen teletrabajador, es primordial que posea ciertas habilidades y conocimientos, así como buena disposición hacia el teletrabajo.	Peters et al. (2004); Pérez et al. (2005); Mello (2007); Tureken et al. (2011); Burbach y Day (2012); Ahmed et al. (2014).
Rechazo entre los empleadores	Desconfianza hacia el comportamiento de los empleados fuera de la supervisión física. Preocupación por que los desafíos de coordinación incrementen su carga laboral.	Pérez et al. (2005); Mello (2007); Tureken et al. (2011); Neufeld et al. (2010); Bloom et al. (2012); Kirs y Bagchi (2012).
Resistencia al cambio de las estructuras organizacionales	Implica un cambio de perspectiva en la cultura del trabajo tradicional soportada en la presencialidad.	Illegems y Verbeke (2004); Pérez et al. (2005).
Temor a la incertidumbre	El desconocimiento sobre el concepto de teletrabajo o sus beneficios potenciales conlleva a tener recelo en su adopción.	Peters y Dulk (2003); Pérez et al. (2005); Dickson y Clear (2006).
Aspectos culturales	Las dinámicas de adopción también se ven matizadas por aspectos culturales.	Peters y Dulk (2003); Topi (2004); Valmohammadi (2012).

Fuente: Tapasco-Alzate y Giraldo-García (2020).

Si bien la pandemia determinó un teletrabajo forzado, son innegables los beneficios que esta modalidad laboral puede representar para las organizaciones y para las personas. Por ello, se convierte en un gran reto para la gestión de talento humano promover acciones orientadas a:

- Replantear los procesos laborales, con el fin de adaptar las actividades a las nuevas condiciones mediadas por las TIC. Asimismo, actualizarlas a las nuevas circunstancias y exigencias del entorno.
- Establecer las condiciones o competencias que deben cumplir las personas para asegurar el éxito en el trabajo a distancia.
- Promover a nivel organizacional canales de comunicación efectivos, por medio del uso de la virtualidad, con miras a fortalecer los vínculos en los equipos de trabajo.
- Determinar las actividades que pueden ser realizadas de manera remota, con el fin de ajustar las descripciones de los puestos.

Todo lo anterior se considera necesario para una implementación eficaz del teletrabajo a nivel organizacional.

- c) *Cambios en la fuerza laboral.* Son variadas las razones por las cuales se ha diversificado la fuerza laboral a lo interno de las organizaciones. Bohlander y Snell (2008) mencionan la globalización que trajo consigo la migración laboral, lo cual enriqueció el ámbito laboral con la convergencia de culturas, intereses,

preferencias, entre otros. Por su parte, Chiavenato (2020) menciona como una de las causas, “la sustitución de una economía sustentada en la manufactura y la explotación de recursos naturales por una economía basada en el valor del conocimiento, la información y la innovación” (p. 32), lo que ha llevado a una mayor conciencia sobre el talento y las competencias de las personas como los grandes valores organizacionales.

Con lo anterior, el gran reto del mundo laboral actual es cómo lograr la ventaja competitiva por medio de las personas. Namdarian *et al.* (2020) indican que la combinación del conocimiento con otros factores organizacionales (estructura, recursos y estrategia), resultan la clave para crear valor individual y colectivo, con el fin de obtener empresas e instituciones innovadoras, creativas y eficaces.

d) *La estructura organizacional.* La eficacia y la eficiencia empresarial tienen cimentado el éxito en la forma en que se definen los procesos, las actividades y tareas de la organización, y de cómo estas se orientan a la consecución de los resultados con estándares de calidad y excelencia, mediante mecanismos de comunicación e información fluidos entre todas las partes que intervienen en el ámbito laboral. Murillo-Vargas *et al.* (2019) indican lo siguiente:

La estructura organizativa evidencia el diseño formal de roles que permite integrar las funciones, flujos de trabajo y líneas de autoridad, en función de los objetivos establecidos por una organización. Las estructuras organizativas son orgánicas cuando existe descentralización en la toma de decisiones, comunicaciones abiertas y mayor flexibilidad. Por el contrario, las estructuras mecanicistas suelen tener mayor control y rigurosidad en los procesos normativos, el flujo de información y centralización en la toma de decisiones. (p. 22)

Durante mucho tiempo en las organizaciones se apostó por la implementación de estructuras tradicionales, rígidas, divididas esencialmente por la especialización de procesos y nivel de jerarquía en la cadena de mando. Hoy, el diseño de una estructura debe contemplar aspectos que se orienten al éxito. Robbins y Judge (2017) indican que estos elementos a considerar en el diseño de la estructura son:

- La estrategia. Tiene relación directa con la creación de valor. Define la metodología que se llevará a cabo y las propuestas organizacionales para cumplir con los objetivos.
- Tamaño de la organización. Debe analizarse el tamaño de la empresa para definir cuál modelo de diseño de estructura se ajuste más, con el fin de procurar los efectos de los procesos de trabajo.
- Tecnología. La manera en que se utiliza la tecnología para transformar los insumos en resultados, así como el grado de dependencia de esta para la eficacia de los procesos laborales, debe ser un punto a analizar en la definición de la estructura, con el fin de promover niveles de coordinación y supervisión orientados al éxito organizacional.
- Ambiente. Para el diseño de una estructura eficiente es necesario tomar en cuenta la estabilidad en que se desarrolla el sector en el cual se mueve la empresa, el crecimiento que soporta para una generación de resultados eficiente y la complejidad referida a la forma en que convergen los métodos para la consecución de objetivos, normativa interna y externa atinente al área de acción y el tipo de competencia a la que se enfrenta en el mercado.
- Instituciones: Robbins y Judge (2017) definen este criterio como “factores culturales que provocan que muchas organizaciones tengan estructuras similares, sobre todo los factores que quizá no conduzcan a consecuencias adaptativas” (p. 513).

## GESTIONAR EL TALENTO EN EL CONTEXTO UNIVERSITARIO ESTATAL

El acelerado avance de la tecnología y su incorporación en los procesos laborales ha modificado no solo la forma en que se realiza el trabajo y sus resultados, sino que también ha producido un cambio en el acceso a la información y, por ende, transformó por completo las necesidades de la humanidad. Bindé (2005) menciona:

En las sociedades del conocimiento, los valores y prácticas de creatividad e innovación desempeñarán un papel muy importante, aunque sea por su capacidad de poner en tela de juicio a las nuevas necesidades de la sociedad. La creatividad y la innovación conducen asimismo a promover procesos de colaboración de nuevo tipo que hayan dado resultados especialmente fructíferos. (p. 19)

Desde esta perspectiva, Zurbriggen y González-Lago (2014) indican:

El gran desafío de las sociedades actuales se encuentra en la capacidad de desarrollar nuevas formas de trabajar colaborativamente y nuevas formas de gestionar el conocimiento (diálogo de saberes), con el objetivo de construir una visión-acción común para resolver problemas públicos con una lógica transformadora. Ello demanda nuevos abordajes transdisciplinarios, multiactorales y multisectoriales y, por lo tanto, integrales, dejando de lado los enfoques dicotómicos (Estado versus mercado versus sociedad, competitividad versus equidad versus medio ambiente) por abordajes articulados entre los distintos actores intervinientes. Para esto se requiere un cambio de paradigma en cuanto al enfoque y al uso de nuevas metodologías que permitan comprender y entender la realidad y, por lo tanto, para construir el conocimiento. (p. 341)

En este contexto, las universidades toman un rol esencial como agentes de transformación y promotoras del desarrollo social. Rodríguez-Ponce (2009) describe con claridad el papel que tienen las universidades y su contribución a la movilidad social y equidad en la sociedad del conocimiento:

La sociedad de conocimiento y la era de la globalización imponen a los sistemas universitarios ciertos desafíos centrales para las instituciones ubicadas en cualquier parte del mundo. Primero, las instituciones universitarias deben constituirse en un elemento básico para generar mayores niveles de competitividad en el país. En efecto, en la sociedad del conocimiento y en un ambiente globalizado la formación de capital humano, avanzado, así como la investigación, el desarrollo y la innovación constituyen pilares fundamentales de la ventaja competitiva para la nación sus organizaciones. Segundo, las instituciones universitarias deben constituirse en una fuente esencial de oportunidades de formación continua y movilidad social. (p. 826)

Esta función esencial de las universidades como potenciadores del desarrollo social —lo cual representa su valor público— requiere de políticas internas que generen eficiencia y eficacia en su quehacer. Como se ha indicado a lo largo de este artículo, las personas constituyen el eje central para el logro de los objetivos de la organización, por lo que es de vital importancia analizar cuáles deben ser las prácticas comunes para gestionar el talento en una institución de educación superior, con miras a obtener, por medio del capital humano, los elementos distintivos que permitan lograr el éxito en cada una de las áreas que la componen.

## RESULTADO DEL ANÁLISIS Y APLICACIÓN EN EL CONTEXTO UNIVERSITARIO

A continuación, se presentan los resultados de este análisis, distribuidos por área de interés dentro de la gestión de talento humano en el ámbito universitario:

### Cultura organizacional

Para Robbins y Judge (2017) existen siete características por las que una organización se distingue de otras (elemento diferenciador competitivo), mediante las cuales se puede ver su esencia; estas son: “innovación y toma de riesgos, atención a los detalles, orientación a la gente, orientación a los equipos, dinamismo y estabilidad” (p. 527). Para cumplir su misión, las universidades deben promover ambientes laborales en los que las personas puedan desarrollarse, y se les permita la incorporación de ideas innovadoras y creativas, y en los que se les faculte para la toma de decisiones en su ámbito de acción.

Para la consecución de este fin, la gestión de talento humano debe preocuparse por promover liderazgos institucionales que susciten en sus equipos de trabajo las siguientes actitudes:

- Visión a futuro.
- Empoderamientos.
- Libertad para crear e innovar.
- Mantener una conducta congruente con los principios y valores organizacionales.
- Búsqueda de soluciones para cumplir metas.
- Aprendizaje.

Para generar lo anterior, las universidades deben procurar procesos estrictos de selección de sus líderes en las diferentes áreas, con el fin de contar con personas que se destaquen por: dominio teórico de su disciplina, ética,

vocación de servicio, deseo continuo de aprendizaje, liderazgo participativo, empatía, coherencia y disciplina. Adicionalmente, desde la gestión de talento humano se pueden establecer programas continuos para promover estos saberes, principios y valores, para mantener actualizados sus liderazgos.

## Estructura organizacional

La forma en que se vinculen todos los elementos que intervienen en la consecución de la estrategia organizacional se convierte en un factor clave para el logro de los resultados que se esperan. Del análisis de la estructura de una institución se puede comprender su esencia, su forma de gestionar las actividades, sus líneas de autoridad y la forma de organizarse para generar sus servicios. En una institución de educación superior, la estructura debe estar diseñada de manera que promueva: disposición de actividades (división del trabajo) destinadas al cumplimiento de la misión, canales efectivos de comunicación y coordinación entre los elementos que convergen, procesos académicos con excelencia, orientación a la calidad, compromiso con la investigación, procesos efectivos de planificación, una adecuada gestión financiera, políticas definidas de talento humano y aplicación de procesos de evaluación institucional orientados hacia la mejora continua.

En síntesis, es de vital relevancia en el contexto universitario la implementación de una estructura orientada a la consecución de sus objetivos con altos estándares de excelencia, que cumpla con las expectativas del país y que promueva el desarrollo social que es su fin último.

## Gestión de talento humano como facilitador de procesos esenciales universitarios

**Planeación del talento humano.** El proceso de planeación tiene dos etapas. La primera, relacionada con las características que deben tener las personas para incorporarse de manera efectiva a una organización, es decir, todas aquellas particularidades que las distinguen y las orientan a cumplir con la estrategia. La segunda, la cantidad de personas que se requieren para el cumplimiento eficaz de su razón de ser. Para que ambas etapas sean exitosas es imprescindible como primer paso que exista una definición muy clara de su misión, su visión, sus objetivos estratégicos y que, de manera expresa, se identifiquen los principios y valores que fundamentan su cultura. Finalmente, es necesaria una efectiva estructuración de procesos de trabajo para la consecución del propósito de creación.

Una propuesta para definir los factores que se tienen que tomar en cuenta para planificar el talento humano es dividirlos en: 1) Factores externos: orientación social y productiva del país, tendencias del mercado laboral (internacional y nacional) que orientan las necesidades de formación o capacitación, políticas gubernamentales, contexto en que se encuentra la educación y la situación de la economía, tanto del país como de la organización. 2) Factores internos: oferta del mercado en los diferentes puestos, grado de mediación de la tecnología en los procesos de trabajo, nivel de especialización requerido, evaluación continua de cambios en la demanda de conocimientos, habilidades o destrezas, niveles y tipos de ausentismos e índices de rotación.

La gestión de talento humano debe acompañar de manera estratégica estos procesos de definición, con el fin no solo de proporcionar información de la situación país y del mercado laboral que sustente la toma de decisiones, sino para alinear de manera efectiva el resto de procesos atinentes al área, de forma que exista coherencia entre las políticas organizacionales y la gestión de talento humano. Además, como función inherente a su actividad, debe establecer canales de comunicación e información, con el fin lograr que las personas interioricen la cultura y las decisiones organizacionales.

**Análisis ocupacional y diseño de puestos.** En el ámbito universitario gestionar el talento humano debe partir del conocimiento como fuente esencial para generar ventaja estratégica, ya que es un factor central para la innovación y la creatividad organizacional, en el que se mezclan las necesidades de aprendizajes con las experiencias vividas en el ámbito institucional. Desde esta perspectiva, la gestión por competencias se convierte en un proceso primordial para implementar en la organización la movilidad del talento humano hacia el cumplimiento de objetivos y metas con altos estándares de excelencia.

Para lograr un ajuste entre los puestos y la estrategia institucional, es necesario que el análisis ocupacional parta de la definición del marco estratégico, con el fin de adaptar las tareas a los resultados que se esperan para cada uno de los procesos definidos en la estructura organizacional. La determinación de los puestos debe estar distribuida de manera que garantice el cumplimiento integral de los objetivos, como una forma de certificar el éxito colectivo.

Fernández-López (2006) señala que “la gestión por competencias viene a introducir conceptos para flexibilizar la dirección de los empleados y poder adaptarla a las necesidades de la organización de la empresa” (p. 22).

La Organización Internacional del Trabajo (OIT) define las competencias como:

Capacidad de articular y movilizar condiciones intelectuales y emocionales en términos de conocimientos, habilidades, actitudes y prácticas, necesarias para el desempeño de una determinada función o actividad, de manera eficiente, eficaz y creativa, conforme a la naturaleza del trabajo. Capacidad productiva de un individuo que se define y mide en términos de desempeño real y demostrando en determinado contexto de trabajo y que no resulta solo de la instrucción, sino que, de la experiencia en situaciones concretas de ejercicio ocupacional. (citado por OTC, 2021, párr. 1)

De esta definición queda claro que la competencia no es una expectativa, sino es una capacidad demostrada, medible y cuantificable. Para la definición de las competencias que se ajustan a la institución, es necesario realizar lo siguiente:

- Tener claros los procesos de trabajo y sus resultados.
- Conocer los principios y valores que rigen a la organización.
- Definir las macro actividades por medio de las cuales se lograrán los resultados.
- Determinar los conocimientos que se requieren para llevar a cabo las actividades.
- Establecer cuáles habilidades y destrezas harán la diferencia en cada tarea.
- Identificar para cada actividad los principios y valores que rigen, alineados con los de la institución.

Una vez definido lo anterior, se propone la siguiente clasificación de las competencias:

- **Transversales:** son las competencias genéricas que deben estar presente en todos los puestos de la institución. Se relacionan de manera directa con la razón de ser de la organización. Por ejemplo, calidad, innovación y creatividad.
- **Gerenciales:** se refiere a las conductas, habilidades, destrezas que debe manifestar una persona para una dirección efectiva de equipos de trabajo. Entre estas están: liderazgo, empatía, comunicación, manejo de conflictos, ética, planeación, entre otras.
- **Específicas:** se relacionan con las habilidades, destrezas, actitudes y valores que se deben manifestar en el desempeño de un cargo.

Las habilidades blandas o habilidades de las personas se encuentran incluidas en los tres grupos de competencias mencionados, por cuanto son las que impulsan la inteligencia emocional. La participación activa en la definición de las competencias de las personas que realizan el trabajo, se convierte en factor clave para el éxito de este proceso, por cuanto es la forma más objetiva de obtener la información que relacione el perfil con las tareas de los puestos. La descripción del cargo en una gestión por procesos y competencias, debe contener, además de la definición de proceso y la actividad de manera específica, los resultados que se esperan. Para ello, la definición de indicadores contribuirá a generar un control efectivo sobre el cumplimiento de metas o, en su defecto, poder implementar ajustes de manera oportuna.

**Captación del talento humano** Los procesos de selección de personal estuvieron centralizados en los departamentos de recursos humanos por muchas décadas. Chiavenato (2020) los identifica como planteamientos tradicionales, en donde predomina el enfoque operacional y burocrático, con procesos estandarizados, llevados a cabo de manera secuencial. Además, indica que “el modelo es vegetativo por el hecho de que busca que se ocupe la vacante para mantener el statu quo de la organización” (p. 89), como característica de este modelo es que concentra toda la incorporación de personas en la gestión de talento humano.

El enfoque moderno, por el contrario, es más estratégico. El proceso de captar personas a la organización es responsabilidad del personal de línea, con la asesoría de los profesionales de la gestión de talento humano. Optar por este enfoque tiene la ventaja de que, al tener una participación más activa dentro del proceso de selección, los tomadores de decisiones tienen la oportunidad de formar sus propios equipos de trabajo, lo que podría generar mayor sinergia hacia la consecución de los objetivos y metas.

En este modelo estratégico de captación de talento no existen técnicas únicas aplicadas de manera uniforme para la determinación de la idoneidad en un puesto. Por el contrario, se produce un ajuste constante de acuerdo con las necesidades del proceso de trabajo de que se trate; es decir, una propuesta a la medida.

**Gestión del desempeño.** El entorno en el que se desenvuelven las organizaciones en la actualidad tiene una característica común: la incertidumbre. Ante este panorama, es claro que sobreviven aquellas instituciones que logran obtener los resultados a pesar de las situaciones a las que se tienen que enfrentar en su cotidianidad. La única certeza que se puede afirmar es que es por medio de las personas que se logran los resultados, por lo que la incógnita a resolver sería: ¿cómo se puede medir la contribución que se hace a nivel individual para determinar el aporte en la consecución de los objetivos y metas?

Han sido diversas las propuestas planteadas para resolver esta interrogante. Algunas miden las características de las personas, otras relacionan estas características con las funciones del puesto. No obstante, lo que es una verdad en el contexto actual, es que es esencial conocer los resultados, por ello, un sistema de gestión del desempeño debe incluir, al menos, lo siguiente:

- Definición de metas por cumplir.
- Indicadores que permiten medir de manera objetiva esas metas.
- Competencias requeridas para la consecución de los objetivos.
- Tabla para medir resultados.
- Tabla para medir competencias.
- Establecimiento de escalas.
- Definición de cada criterio de la escala.
- Instrumentos de evaluación sencillos, acompañados de manuales accesibles, tanto para quien evalúa como para las personas evaluadas.
- Gestión de realimentación.
- Socialización.

Gestionar el desempeño requiere establecer procesos de planificación del trabajo, establecimiento de metas, incorporación de indicadores y la realimentación como proceso final para producir mejora continua. Visualizar de esta forma la evaluación del desempeño lleva a abandonar la antigua percepción punitiva, para transformarla en una oportunidad clara para corregir deficiencias y producir excelencia, o bien, trascender a otros niveles de la organización. Para que este proceso sea exitoso es requerimiento imprescindible que los procesos de sensibilización y comunicación sean abiertos, transparentes y objetivos.

**Gestión de la capacitación o formación.** Los procesos de capacitación o formación históricamente han estado envueltos en mitos que han ocasionado desidia en las personas que tienen a cargo la toma de decisiones a nivel organizacional. Un ejemplo de ello es pensar que la capacitación es un gasto o creer que solo es por medio de la capacitación que se corrigen los problemas del desempeño.

Por lo anterior, se propone lo siguiente para una institución de educación superior:

- 1) Un primer paso es determinar la forma en que se van a detectar las necesidades de capacitación o formación. Esta detección, en un modelo de gestión por competencias, debe estar orientada a conocer cuáles de las brechas existen entre el nivel de eficacia actual y el esperado para el desempeño individual (optimización). Asimismo, una necesidad de capacitación puede darse cuando se logre identificar que existen nuevos conocimientos que deben incorporarse, en virtud de un cambio en el proceso de trabajo. En una institución de educación superior, la gestión de talento humano debe ocuparse de proveer a la organización de personas críticas, actualizadas, con deseo de aprendizaje continuo y autónomos en su desempeño.
- 2) Planes de sucesión. El análisis de los índices de rotación y el estudio de los indicadores de empleo de la institución (característica de la población laboral) deben dar como resultado la necesidad de implementar programas de formación específicamente en puestos estratégicos, con el fin de identificar aquellos posibles talentos que puedan ocupar otras posiciones.
- 3) Nuevos procesos de trabajo o diversificación. Deben existir canales de comunicación continuos entre los tomadores de decisiones y la gestión de talento humano, con el fin de responder de manera oportuna a los cambios en los procesos, que requieran personal actualizado o con nuevas formaciones o competencias, que permitan agilizar la incorporación a nuevas ocupaciones. Esta forma estratégica de gestionar el talento permitirá reaccionar de manera adecuada a los cambios del entorno.

Como puede observarse, en todos los casos la detección de las necesidades de capacitación o formación parten de una necesidad institucional. La administración de recursos humanos debe procurar mantener una batería de instrumentos actualizada, que le permita mantenerse en constante monitoreo de los cambios del entorno y, de ese modo, formular oportunamente la respuesta que la organización requiere. Los viejos programas de capacitación, prediseñados y sin visión de futuro, han dado paso a la investigación, al contacto con el ambiente y a la respuesta estratégica que se espera de su gestión.

**Gestión de la compensación.** En virtud del período de contracción de la economía por el que el mundo atraviesa, producto de las medidas de suspensión de actividades que los países han tenido que aplicar para contener la propagación del COVID-19, el tema de diseño de sistemas salariales ha quedado relegado en la discusión habitual, dando paso a la necesidad de obtener trabajo o estabilidad laboral. Sin embargo, todo diseño de sistema salarial debe contener al menos dos de las siguientes políticas: la equidad, referida al pago justo por los niveles de responsabilidad, complejidad, dificultad e impacto de las funciones que se realiza y la competitividad relativa a la ubicación del salario, con respecto a lo que se paga en puestos homólogos en instituciones del mismo ramo. La gestión de talento humano, en este aspecto, debe procurar mantener una estructura de puestos actualizada, de manera que provea instrumentos que garanticen la justicia en los niveles de compensación que se aplican en la organización.

En el modelo de gestión por competencias son diferentes aspectos los que deben determinarse con el fin de lograr una aplicación exitosa de la remuneración por competencias. Varela (2013) propone los siguientes:

- 4) 1. Un sistema que define aptitudes específicas, así como un proceso para determinar el pago de la persona con base en sus aptitudes y competencias.
- 5) 2. Un sistema de capacitación que permite a los empleados buscar y adquirir aptitudes.
- 6) 3. Un sistema formal de prueba de competencias.
- 7) 4. Un diseño de trabajo que permite a los empleados cambiar de puesto para promover la flexibilidad en la asignación de labores. (p. 277)

En todo caso, el éxito de la implementación de un buen sistema salarial depende de: a) análisis objetivo de la situación laboral y económica de la institución, b) amplia participación de los diferentes sectores en la discusión de las variables a incluir, c) la concientización de la factibilidad de la aplicación y d) políticas internas y externas sobre el salario en la organización.

## CONCLUSIÓN

Con la evolución del concepto de “persona como centro de la organización”, la gestión de talento humano ha tenido que pasar de un rol pasivo, tramitador, tradicional y operativo, a ocupar un lugar estratégico, direccionando todos sus procesos hacia un liderazgo transformacional orientado a la innovación, la creatividad, la calidad y la incorporación de estándares de excelencia en el quehacer organizacional. Esta relevancia que ha adquirido en el contexto laboral actual requiere de un cambio paradigmático en lo que hasta ahora la administración del recurso humano había representado en las instituciones.

Un primer punto de discusión para lograr ese salto cualitativo en la gestión es el análisis crítico de lo que se hace, con el fin de medir de manera objetiva el aporte que se brinda a la organización, y se incorpora la revisión de criterios que se consideran diferenciadores de una efectiva gestión de talento humano. Es decir, el análisis de su cadena de valor, compuesta por: incorporación de la visión estratégica de la institución como norte de las actividades de talento humano, aporte y orientación de cada uno de los procesos a la consecución de la estrategia, niveles de coordinación y comunicación, flexibilidad, entre otros. Este análisis debe llevar a la toma de decisiones sobre los cambios urgentes que deben realizarse con el fin de ofrecer a las organizaciones el aporte estratégico que esta requiere. Huseild *et al.* (2005) resumen la función estratégica de los recursos humanos de la siguiente forma:

La visión de sociedad estratégica del departamento de recursos humanos debería centrarse primero en la responsabilidad compartida de la ejecución de la estrategia de la empresa, dado que allí es donde se puede dar la verdadera contribución estratégica de los recursos humanos. Esto significa que los profesionales de recursos humanos necesitan aceptar la responsabilidad de una serie de actividades que se escapan del alcance habitual de su gestión. (p. 87)

Otro tema que debe ser analizado en este nuevo escenario es el protagonismo del accionar de la administración de recursos humanos. Desde esta perspectiva, es importante recordar que la gestión de talento tiene una función *staff*, es decir, su propósito fundamental es asesorar a las personas tomadoras de decisiones en los temas relacionados con el talento humano, y generar propuestas de ajuste o visión de futuro por medio del monitoreo constante de las variables que intervienen en el entorno en que se mueve la organización. Su eficacia debe ser medida justamente por los aportes que realiza a la estrategia, su capacidad para proponer de manera oportuna ajustes producto de potenciales problemas y la actualidad de sus procesos.

Esta nueva perspectiva de la administración de recursos humanos requiere también de un cambio en el perfil de quienes lideran estos procesos. En la administración tradicional bastaba con tener conocimientos específicos en el área para tener éxito. El entorno actual plantea una serie de habilidades, conductas, destrezas y aptitudes, las cuales deben estar manifiestas en el desempeño de la persona que tiene a cargo la función de dirigir esta actividad. A continuación, se plantea un resumen de las características consideradas como diferenciadoras, que deberán estar presentes en la persona que lidere los procesos de talento humano en una organización, principalmente en una institución de educación superior:

- **Pensamiento sistémico.** Zapata et al. (2008) indican que esta competencia se refiere a la toma de decisiones consensuada, se toman en consideración escenarios, opciones, consulta con personas expertas a nivel institucional en el tema, para una efectiva toma de decisiones.
- **Credibilidad técnica.** Definida por Alles (2009) como “la capacidad para generar confianza en los demás por su desempeño profesional y constituirse en un referente a quien consultar. Implica ser reconocido por poseer sólidos conocimientos y experiencia” (p. 175).
- **Ética.** Disposición para adaptar su actuación a los principios y valores establecidos en la institución. La persona debe ser muy rigurosa en mantener coherencia entre lo que dice y lo que hace.
- **Facilidad en la comunicación.** Implica la capacidad para saber interactuar con sus colaboradores y con el resto del personal de la organización.
- **Habilidades sociales.** Se refiere a diferentes competencias que deberá tener la persona que lidere el proceso de talento humano, relacionadas con el ámbito social, que se constituyen en estrategias de conducta que le permiten relacionarse con las demás personas de manera efectiva. Entre ellas están: empatía, asertividad y negociación.

Estas características, aunadas a un contexto institucional que permita el empoderamiento, el trabajo en equipo y el aprendizaje continuo, además de un clima laboral que facilite la comunicación y la información fluida y transparente, serán la clave para promover ambientes laborales que procuren la motivación organizacional mediante procesos de mejora y actualización. Los espacios laborales universitarios deben dinamizarse por medio del conocimiento. En este sentido, el aporte de la gestión de talento humano para promover entornos competitivos es invaluable, ya que establece acciones para que se logren transformar esos conocimientos en mejores prácticas y, de esa manera, coadyuvar en la articulación que debe existir entre la gestión interna y los cambios del entorno.

Por último, deben incorporarse a la gestión de talento humano indicadores que permitan medir el nivel aporte que realiza a los procesos clave institucionales. De forma que pueda cuantificarse la cadena de valor real de la gestión de talento humano y, en caso de encontrar desviaciones, se implementen acciones de mejora oportunamente.

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