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DEVELOPING A RESILIENT SOCIETY: THE ROLE OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Presented by: A J, Dr. LAKSHMI

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Background:

Inclusive sustainable development is very much on a higher pedestal in the cooperatives (Sehlin, Truedsson and Cronemyr, 2019). Cooperatives are the type of institution which is not only preferred to overcome the shortcomings of other forms of institutions but also an answer to all the importunate circumstances prevailing in society. The shortcomings are generally in the capacity of other forms of institutions in bringing an inclusive idea, failure to address the larger social concerns and its inherent nature of being highly focused on economic attributes (Inclusive-Society.Pdf, n.d.). The success story of cooperatives in the end mass is usually connected with those cooperatives that have been created to overcome these aspects (Alavosius et al., 2009). Rather the utility of cooperatives for serving the underprivileged population is very much an indicator of the importance of cooperatives in the context of inclusive sustainable development (Castilla-Polo and Sánchez-Hernández, 2020). In the Indian context also these narratives stand good (Ghosh, A. K. 2007). Cooperatives are the finest form of organisation that has the concept of creating a sustainable society inbuilt (United Nations, & United Nations (Eds.).2008). In short, cooperatives are the one-stop solution for all the importunate circumstances in the present world.

Even though the presence of a cooperative form of organisation can be traced in all parts of the globe, the relevance of the same is still not integrated in its true sense. One of the major principles of cooperation is imparting cooperative education and training because without having a proper understanding of the cooperative identity the same will be similar to any other form of organisation (Kinyuira, 2018). It is the cooperative identity which is differentiating the same with the other forms of organisation. The major thread in the principle of Education and training is to effectively utilise cooperative heritage to inform and inspire members, management, board of directors, managers, employees and prospective members. (ICA Guidance Notes EN.pdf. (n.d). Hence cooperative education and training is a very important principle.

This paper is trying to analyse the structure and strategy followed in imparting the principle of cooperative education and training in a country like India. The same can be explained with the help of secondary data. An analysis of the legislation is also done to identify the adequacy of provisions in the legislation that supports imparting cooperative training and education in Kerala a province in India. Lastly, primary data is collected to evaluate the strategies and sufficiency of staff in the organisations imparting cooperative education and training to meet the requirement of the cooperatives in Kerala. An analysis of the same is done using statistical tools.

Objectives of the Study:

To analyse the innovative ways used in India for imparting cooperative education and training

To examine the adequacy of provisions in the legislation of Kerala that supports imparting cooperative training and education.

To examine the strategies used by the organisations imparting cooperative education and training in Kerala

To evaluate whether these organisations have a sufficient amount of staff and training programs to meet the need of the cooperatives

Research Methodology:

The paper is doctrinal in nature and reliance is on data from both the legislation of Kerala and other secondary sources.

Primary Data is collected from the organisations which are imparting cooperative education and training in Kerala.

Statistical analysis of the data collection can be done using different statistical tools.

A content analysis of the legislation will also be done to identify the legislative support for imparting cooperative training and education in Kerala.

The relied upon secondary materials including regulations, books, articles, reports etc.

Results and discussion:

The major thread in the principle of Education and training is to effectively utilise cooperative heritage to inform and inspire members, management, board of directors, managers, employees and prospective members. This story of the evolution of the concept of cooperation to the now visible structure has faced serious challenges. And how these co-operators have overcome them is one of the greatest educational resources and motivation. It is basically the responsibility of the co-operators to cherish and safeguard the heritage and to utilize the same in their learning programmes. Hence whether these strategies are galore to meet future needs has to be analysed.

Contributions and implications:

This paper identifies the strength and weaknesses in the existing ways of imparting cooperative education and training, the implication of the same is instigating practical change in order to Create a Resilient Society. It also comes up with innovative ways and means through which the same can be implemented to fit into the current educational system to contribute towards developing a resilient society.

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In pursuit of a cooperative mindset: Cooperative Management Business Simulation Outcomes

Presented by: Abib, Gustavo

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Organisations: Parana Federal University, Brazil

In pursuit of a cooperative mindset: Cooperative Management Business Simulation Outcomes

Background

The tools used to boost active methodologies have become present in educational institutions' learning processes and corporate education (Baptista & Oliveira, 2019).

Cooperative has always been "taught" less formally and far away from the curricula of universities worldwide. It has been the role of international (i.e., International Cooperative Alliance) and national cooperative associations (i.e., Cooperative Organization of Brazil in Brazil) to keep cooperative education active.

One big challenge cooperatives face consolidating their principles among their employees and members. So, how to teach the co-op principles? How to develop a cooperative mindset instead of merely competitive organizational logic?

To answer these questions, a cooperative business game was adopted to support the consolidation of the cooperative principles and management issues in some courses involving members and employees of several cooperatives.

The simulator chosen was OGG COOP (www.oggsimulation.com), which reproduces an agribusiness cooperative in the Brazilian market. The players were divided into boards, the cooperative president, and the managers of the areas (operations, marketing, people management, and finance). Each cooperative started the simulation with 200 members and \$128k in cash. The cooperatives also had a manufacturing facility, cargo receiving structure, and warehouse for manufactured products. The scenario chosen was the plant-based burger industry. The players' objective was to negotiate and buy raw materials from the co-op members, industrialize, and sell in an oligopolistic market. In the end, the profits were summed, and the growth of the cooperative's members board was analyzed.

Aims

This research highlights how a cooperative business simulation boosts the development of a co-op mindset through hard and soft skills for co-op members and employees. Also, describe some learning opportunities using the cooperative management business simulation.

Methods

We conducted qualitative research with 169 students participating in the cooperative business simulation (62 coop workers and 107 coop members). The students were from MBA courses focused on cooperative, extension, and open courses. The questionnaires were collected during the years 2020 to 2022. The Business Simulation course load varies from 8 to 30 hours.

To collect the data, open-ended questionnaires were used, where the participants could list the main differentials perceived with the use of simulation, the competencies developed (individual and in the team), and the challenges experienced. In addition, some interviews were also carried out with some of the participants to deepen the results.

The content analysis followed the guidelines of (Krippendorff, 2018) and included the following categories: i) cooperative principles, ii) hard skills, iii) soft skills, and iv) learning process.

Results and Discussion

Among the participants, none had had a previous experience with an online business simulation. The first point to note is that perceptions differed between cooperative members and workers. However, both were unanimous in affirming that the simulator allowed a systemic vision of the cooperative, both in the management and relationship aspects between the cooperative and its members.

When analyzing the cooperative principles, the simulation allowed the participants to understand the power relations, the voluntary entry and exit of members (principles 1 & 2), and members' economic participation. Each accounting year, the managers had to prepare an AGM (Annual General Meeting), decide what and how much to distribute as surplus, and above all, together with the members, determine the future of the cooperative (principles 3 & 4). Decisions more in line with principle five (education, training, and information) contributed to the expansion of the member board. In addition, some cooperatives shared information, reducing costs and creating inter cooperation (principle 6). The last principle (seven) was achieved in generating jobs and income in the region where the cooperative was installed. One participant said, "It was exciting to see how the cooperative principles occur in the daily life of the cooperative.

The members and employees of the cooperatives were also able to work on participative management practices through periodic meetings before inputting the decisions into the simulator, developing an integrated overview of the various functional areas of the cooperative.

Similar to traditional business simulators, it was possible to identify in the questionnaires some critical results in the development of the participants, such as team building; results oriented; challenges in the management of human relations and people engagement; possibility to invest in innovation; need to adapt to new market situations and group orientation in detriment of individualism (more perceived by the employees).

According to the cooperative's members, the simulation allowed them to develop or reinforce elements of hard skills such as financial analysis, strategic and project management, sales and marketing, and pricing.

Finally, the learning process for both participants was more "experiential," and the simulation connected the concepts with the decisions made during the simulation, contributing to creating a cooperative mindset.

Contributions and Implications

Using the business simulation as a tool for accelerating learning and changing mindsets proved very useful and effective. Furthermore, due to its flexibility, it is possible to work on several administrative routines of the cooperatives and simultaneously teach and solidify the cooperative principles in the participants.

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Keywords:

Simulation management; co-op principles; coop management; business games.

Impact of cooperatives on smallholder cocoa farmers' productivity and their adoption of additional livelihood strategies in Ghana

Presented by: Amegbe, Emmanuel Dela

Authors: Hejkrlik, Jiří; Amegbe, Emmanuel Dela

Organisations: Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, Czech Republic

Ahafo-Ano South West district is one of Ghana's most densely populated cocoa-growing areas. Comprising relatively smaller farm sizes and diverse inhabitants, the district thrives in farming activities. Farming in cocoa continues to be lucrative, especially with various governmental and non-governmental organisations supporting cocoa cooperatives and other cocoa farmer organisations with inputs, extension and credit facilities. Although there is support for cooperatives and farmer associations, some farmers still do not belong to any cooperative or farmer group.

With the increasing cocoa cooperative and farmer group activities in Ghana, it is essential to assess the impact of cooperatives or farmer groups on the productivity of these smallholder farmers. Therefore, the study's main objective was to analyse how participation in a cooperative or farmer group influences the productivity of smallholder farmers. The impact of cooperatives on adopting additional livelihoods was also analysed to assess whether or not cooperatives have a role to play in diversifying the additional livelihood strategies and poverty eradication.

A total of 416 smallholder farmers (219 cooperative/group members and 197 non-cooperative/group members) were sampled. Propensity Score Matching and Inverse Probability Weighted Estimates were used for the analysis. The results show that cooperative participation indeed influenced the productivity of smallholder farmers in the region. Detailed analysis of the factors indicates that involvement in cooperatives is affected positively by land ownership, access to extension, access to credit, perception of reciprocity in a group and access to information. The distance to cooperative meeting grounds, however, influenced participation negatively. Analysis of the impact of cooperatives on adopting additional livelihood also shows that belonging to a cooperative or group indeed affects adoption. Further research into other factors that influence additional livelihood adoption shows that access to extension, access to inputs, experience and household size positively influenced participation. However, age and farm size negatively affect participation in an additional livelihood activity.

"The silent treatment – A study into the omission of co-operative law from curricula in Australian law and business schools.'

Presented by: Apps, Ann Elizabeth

Authors: Apps, Ann Elizabeth (1); Bennison, Linda (2)

Organisations: 1: University of Newcastle, Australia, Australia; 2: Queensland University of Technology, Australia

TITLE: The silent treatment – A study into the omission of co-operative law from curricula in Australian law and business schools.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this paper is to contribute preliminary findings from a study into the Australian tertiary education system to a global discussion on the absence of co-operative law from curricula for undergraduate law and business programs in universities and tertiary education institutions.

BACKGROUND: In Australia there are some significant barriers to including co-operative law in these undergraduate programs, whether as standalone courses, or by expanding the content of existing courses in the program. The legal and accounting professions in Australia are self-regulating and have their own committees responsible for setting the threshold knowledge requirements for admission to the profession. These standards effectively determine the core curricula of the undergraduate degree programs for both professions. In Australia the Law Admissions Consultative Committee ('LACC') decided upon 11 areas of academic study required for admission to practice. One consequence is that the undergraduate program for law students in Australia usually has 11 core or essential courses in its program, leaving limited space for elective courses. The second consequence of the LACC academic requirements is that they are quite prescriptive and set out the recommended topic areas for the subject areas. Company Law is one of the 11 core subject areas, and the topic areas do not leave much room for consideration of alternative corporations like the co-operative model. There are similar prescriptive subject and topic requirements set by professional accreditation bodies for the accounting profession and for taxation specialisations. While the latter do not impact on undergraduate law degrees, they also effectively squeeze out co-operative law from business law curricula in undergraduate programs for accounting and economics. This problem was recognised by the 2016 report of a parliamentary committee following an inquiry into co-operatives and mutuals in Australia. The committee recommended that the professional accreditation bodies add knowledge of co-operatives and mutuals to their admission requirements. (SERC Report Recommendation 3.82). A consequence of their exclusion from current knowledge requirements is that information about co-operatives is not incorporated into textbooks, as they are created and adapted to suit the professional accreditation standards for these degree programs. The lack of content on co-operative law has a 'chicken and egg' effect, so that a lack of knowledge about the co-operative business model perpetuates its absence in both textbooks and curricula.

DESIGN/METHODOLOGY: This preliminary study gathers data from University websites on core courses and electives that could potentially include some co-operative law content. This data is supplemented with desk research for secondary sources relating to tertiary education standards as well as professional accreditation requirements to identify barriers to integrating co-operative law into existing curricula. The data is analysed using the theory of path dependency and the theory of epistemic community. This study also incorporates some preliminary findings taken from earlier research on co-operative education in Australia (Lee et al (2014); Grimstad et al (2021), but with a focus on co-operative law and identification of opportunities for inclusion of topics on co-operative law in existing courses and programs.

FINDINGS: Outside the core courses in various degree programs there is room to explore co-operatives in electives, and this does present some opportunities for the future of education in co-operative law. Students are increasingly interested in human rights, climate change and mitigation strategies, social and solidarity economies. Co-operatives are increasingly recognised as having a presence in these areas. A significant challenge is the rationalisation of universities and tertiary education programmes. In Australia, post covid, many Universities have slashed budgets and reduced staff. The number of elective courses available has been reduced and the those that continue must compete for student enrolments. Co-operative law is highly specialised and not well known, so, as a stand alone elective it is unlikely to attract the required enrolments needed to be treated as a viable elective option.

CONTRIBUTION: This study contributes to a global study seeking to understand the barriers to inclusion of co-operative law in mainstream tertiary programs, especially in undergraduate law and business. It also explores pathways to promote the inclusion of co-operative law in courses and programs at Australian universities and other education institutions. Recommendations include developing open access online resources and modules that can be adapted by teachers for inclusion in both elective and core courses, as well as suggesting the production of a textbook on co-operative law that includes both general co-operative law, and case studies on key legal issues in various countries.

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LEGISLATING FOR CO-OPERATIVE IDENTITY – LESSONS FROM THE HISTORY OF CO-OPERATIVE LAW IN AUSTRALIA

Presented by: Apps, Ann Elizabeth

Authors: Apps, Ann Elizabeth

Organisations: University of Newcastle, Australia

BACKGROUND:

Co-operative historians have contributed a great deal to our understanding of the evolution of a distinct co-operative identity. Today this identity is reflected in the co-operative principles and values, articulated in the International Co-operative Alliance's Statement of Co-operative Identity. The co-operative values and principles serve as a universal guide to the internal governance of co-operative organisations worldwide. But the co-operative identity is not the same as the co-operative's legal identity. The latter is determined by the laws that constitute and enable the co-operative as a legal vehicle for enterprise in a particular country and distinguish it from other enterprise vehicles including the investor-owned company. The legal aspects of co-operatives are acknowledged by co-operative historians but are usually at the periphery of their perspective. A study of the history of co-operative law provides new insights into a complex legal model that emerged in the United Kingdom at around the same time as the modern incorporated company but has received scant attention from legal and business historians.

AIMS AND METHODS:

This paper uses a chronological history to identify and highlight the unique challenges in developing a coherent legal identity for co-operatives in Australia. The historical study has relied on online legal databases to access primary legislation where digitised copies are available. This has been supplemented by Hansard and other parliamentary records. These records are mainly available online via State and Commonwealth parliamentary archives. Additional source material has been located using Trove and secondary sources including published histories. The discussion and analysis uses a combination of doctrinal and historiographical methods. The chronological analysis is divided into four time periods, pre-settlement (1770s – 1840); pre federation (1840s – 1900); post federation (1900s – 1980); post globalisation (1980s – 2020). The analysis begins in the United Kingdom before moving to the colony of New South Wales. New South Wales is the main focus of the history, but where significant variations or developments have occurred in other States or at Commonwealth level, they are also compared.

DISCUSSION AND CONTRIBUTION

The analysis highlights some of the reasons why co-operatives in Australia have struggled to achieve a coherent and strong legal identity. Some of the challenges are the unavoidable consequence of a combination of factors. The complexity of Australia's federal legal system is compounded by the size and geographical diversity of its States. The lack of uniform law for co-operatives was compounded

by the competition for trade between the states, resulting in an absence of national federations of co-operatives. This proved to be disastrous for co-operatives when business regulation in Australia was centralised from the 1980s. A powerful trade union movement and a strong welfare state weakened the potential of co-operatives in most sectors other than agriculture. Agricultural co-operatives were cushioned by industry protections and state marketing authorities. When these were dismantled following the introduction of National Competition Policy in the 1990s, Australia's largest agricultural co-operatives were no match for foreign multinational corporations and were subject to take over and demutualisations. The takeaway lesson from this analysis, is that the co-operative's legal identity is delineated by its enabling statute, but the substance of that identity depends upon its recognition and accommodation in other areas of business law and policy, including tax and competition law. This in turn rests on the political will to see co-operatives succeed and flourish in mainstream business or relegate them to the margins as an alternative vehicle for community and not-for-profit ventures. With the exception of the few surviving commercial co-operatives, Australia seems to have arrived at the latter destination.

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"The silent treatment – A study into the omission of co-operative law from curricula in Australian law and business schools.'

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From cooperative companies management to cooperative management of companies

Presented by: Baron, Christelle

Authors: Baron, Christelle (1); Veyer, Stephane (2,3,4)

Organisations: 1: Université Paris Cité, France; 2: La Manufacture coopérative; 3: Adde; 4: Coopaname

Background

Management issues and practices are often overlooked by research and teaching on cooperatives (Kalmi 2007, Webb 2020). For most cooperative actors, it is frequently a secondary or marginal subject as corporate governance topics or the societal project carried out by the organization are mostly stressed out.

Moreover, inside cooperatives, management issues often seem to be a kind of taboo for members. As a matter of fact, talking about democracy between associates is not an issue. However tackling reality of work is more difficult. For example: how can the members of the cooperative choose between different software solutions or accounting practices that are consistent with the cooperative mindset and principles? Most of the time, in such matters, cooperators act as if they were working in capital driven business. The sincerity of the cooperative project may even hide questionable management practices (Paranque et al 2014) if not worse.

Aims

Management science often tends to analyze these practices as a collection of original, singular, but marginal (Sangiorgio et al 2009) and disparate experiences with regard to a mainstream "objective" or "scientific" approach to business management. However, is it possible to deduce from these practices a structured, coherent approach to business management? In other words: can the experiences of management of cooperative companies set up a theory of cooperative management? A kind of conception of management which would be radically different from capitalist managerial thought, even at its opposite, not only for cooperative companies, but for all companies...?

Methods

In this article, we will mobilize multiple cooperative experiences in which management practices have been reflected, developed and put into practice: worker cooperatives, consumer cooperatives, platform cooperatives, French "SCIC" (multi-stakeholder membership), etc. Our contribution will rely on our experiences as practitioners, ethnographical (Cornelissen 2017) and action-researchers (Draperi 2017) to highlight many examples that illustrate this point.

Results and discussion

We will point out that cooperatives are teeming with original organizational or business management practices. Wage settings, relations with unions, training policy, prevention of discrimination, low tech policy: the examples are numerous. These practices highlight subsequently a

real theoretical corpus of management sciences, including in particular a few key topics such as the co-construction of a way to overcome the distinction between both paid work and voluntary work; the subordination of the principles of action to political, anthropological and moral positions. the place of deliberation in work; the specific temporality of cooperative work; the educational approach to supervisory and management functions; the epistemological posture of action-research as a requirement; and the co-construction of practices by members of the cooperatives (Wenger 1998).

Contributions and Implications

Such an approach could constitute a major social innovation from cooperatives: the ecological, economic or democratic challenges of the coming decades need to question working topics! Cooperatives can answer, by tackling the "how do we do it?" », rather than « what do we do? ». (Jaumier 2016)

It aims at inviting cooperative actors to reclaim management issues, to dare to break with the practices of capital driven business (systematically and radically!), and to make these arguments a privileged means of a cooperative transformation of the economy. We will conclude that cooperative practices are not just "different" or "alternative" management practices (Audebrand et al., 2016) : they can lead to strong practices addressing the management of the "future of work" throughout the economy. This kind of social innovation gets more radically back on track towards the fifth principle of cooperatives in actually practicing education training and information.

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A systematic evidence mapping of the impact of agricultural cooperatives on farmers' performance

Presented by: BARRY, Ibrahima

Authors: BARRY, Ibrahima

Organisations: LEMNA (University of Nantes) & ONIRIS, France

Despite a century of theoretical study, the empirical literature on cooperatives only began to appear in the late 1990s. Agricultural cooperatives have always been evaluated regarding their effects on local economies, agricultural performance and production. However, empirical research on cooperative farmers' performance is extremely under-researched. This systematic review's main objective is to synthesis results and conclusions from research published between 2003 and 2022 and highlight the challenges and opportunities for future studies. It focuses on farmers' performance typologies to evaluate the concerns on the link between cooperative membership/non-membership and farmer performance and the effect of cooperative membership/non-membership on farmer performance. The review is based on 69 manuscripts that met the study inclusion criteria out of 464 extracted from the Web of Science and Scopus databases using key search terms developed based on literature. The review found that the field of study on the effects of the membership of agricultural cooperatives on farmers is a nascent field.

Relationship between Demographic Variables and Personality Traits, Organizational Commitment, and Self-efficacy among Nepalese Savings and Credit Co-operatives Employees

Presented by: Basnet, DessMardan

Authors: Basnet, DessMardan

Organisations: Nepal Open University(NOU)

Relationship between Demographic Variables and Personality Traits, Organizational Commitment, and Self-efficacy among Nepalese Savings and Credit Co-operatives Employees

Dess Marda Basnet, PhD

Nepal Open University (NOU)

Abstract

Background of the study.

Philosophy of Co-operative is nurturing the socio-economic, culture, democratic, self-help, and inner peace among people and the society in the micro-level. Demographic factors are related to person's attributes which contribute to the society. The study aims to analyze the relationships between employees' personality traits, organizational commitments, and self-efficacy and the human factors.

Objectives.

The objective of this study is to find the material status affects organizational commitment, education level affects personality traits, age affects self-efficacy, designation level affects emotional stability traits, and area affects agreeableness personality traits.

Research Methods.

Participants were 826 employees and 206 saving and credit Cooperative of Kathmandu District. It uses the purposive sampling method. The survey was conducted using standardized questionnaires to find the differences between demographic profiles and personality traits, self-efficacy, and organizational commitment. The emotional stability personality trait questionnaire is a bipolar scale. A normality test was used in the study to test the hypotheses. Parametric tests and the non-parametric tests were performed to analyze the data.

Results and Discussion.

A marriage or single cooperative employees have no variations in organizational commitment. It is surprising that employees with undergraduate education levels have higher and more valuable personality attributes. The study concludes that senior adult employees have higher self-efficacy than adult employees in Cooperatives. Metropolitan city Cooperative employees demonstrated a lower degree of agreeableness traits. Hence, the employees of the village development committee and the municipality area Cooperatives perceived cooperation, treating equality and understanding extended help in the organization.

Contribution. The study will contribute to Cooperatives and financial institutions. It helps policymakers and cooperators with Cooperative human resources management. This study explores employees' demographic profiles and their effect on self-efficacy belief, organizational commitment, and personality traits.

Implication: Employees in the rural Village Development Committee or the semi-urban Municipality Cooperative have the culture, self-help, social hearts, and minds required for the cooperative movement. Actually, Demographic characteristics have no significant advantages in human resource management in cooperatives

Social solidarity economy in Asia – preliminary project results

Presented by: Beishenaly, Nazik

Authors: Beishenaly, Nazik

Organisations: KU Leuven, Belgium

The objective of the presentation is to discuss the preliminary results of the research project “Strengthening the Social and Solidarity Economy in Asia Phase II (2021-23)” led by the International Labour Office (ILO, 2022). The term “social and solidarity economy” (SSE) is relatively new in Asia and the Pacific despite the fact that solidarity economy organizations represent important shares of population and involve rural and informal workers, social entrepreneurs, cooperatives, self-help groups and rotating and saving groups (OECD, 2021; Utting, 2017). The objective of the research project is to analyse how the SSE entities contribute to decent work and Sustainable Development Goals identifying challenges and opportunities for these entities to grow.

The conference paper will focus on one of the key characteristics of SSE – democratic and/or participatory governance to explore how SSE entities promote democratic, participatory, and transparent governance, enabling member control through active participation in setting policies and making decisions and by holding elected representatives accountable. Cooperatives are the most known member-based types of SSE in which members have equal voting rights following the ‘one member, one vote’ principle (ICA, 2015; ILO, 2017). The project covers six countries – Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Thailand, and Vietnam and the conference paper will build on the cases studies from these countries. The conference paper will focus on the case of Kyrgyzstan and explore similarities and differences with the cases of other Asian countries on how SSE entities practice democratic governance. The presentation will present cases from selected countries to discuss the challenges and opportunities of democratic governance in cooperatives but also in other SSE entities.

The research will be an important contribution to the conversation on democratic governance and social innovations in hybrid organisations that pursue both social and economic goals. The study will also bring new insights to policy and regulatory discussions on building adapted policy environment for the social and solidarity economy actors learning from the case of Asian SSE entities.

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The impact of policy and legal frameworks on distributing cooperatives and corporations: A path dependence analysis

Presented by: Bennison, Linda

Authors: Bennison, Linda

Organisations: Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Abstract

The object of this paper is to improve understanding of how policy and legal frameworks in Australia have created challenges and opportunities for two similar business entities. Corporations and distributing cooperatives offer limited liability and allow distributions to Australian shareholders however, corporations have gained primacy while distributing cooperatives remain poorly understood with low adoption rates. This qualitative study examines this phenomenon by juxtaposing environmental, regulatory, and corporatisation sequences in a path dependence theoretical framework. Causal processes in an institutional chain of events are identified, extending an earlier path dependence sequence of the Industrial Revolution in Britain to Australia. The findings will inform future policies aimed at enhancing and protecting the unique identity of the cooperative business form and encouraging diversity in the business landscape.

Background

Cooperation between organisations, communities and individuals confers a survival advantage. Cooperative businesses emerged two centuries ago with myriad forms developing to aggregate products and services supplied or required by members in the distribution, marketing or purchasing phases (Birchall, 2011; Patmore et al., 2021). Distributing cooperatives benefit members by allocating their surplus through financial rebates, dividends or improved member services, similar to corporations. Despite similar benefits, the adoption rate of cooperatives has lagged corporations; this conundrum motivates the study. The analytical perspective of path dependence used by historical sociologists, legal scholars, and economists informs the understanding of how institutions develop and technologies are adopted (Goldstone, 1988; Liebowitz & Margolis, 1995; Mahoney, 2000).

Aim

This paper seeks to understand how policy and legal frameworks in Australia have created challenges and opportunities for distributing cooperatives. The findings will inform future policies aimed at enhancing and protecting the unique identity of the cooperative business form.

Methods

Academic publications from business, economics, geography, history, law, social sciences disciplines, Commonwealth, states, and territories legislation, and national and international policy documents were interrogated using Boolean operators and wild cards. The search parameters focused on the noun cooperative in singular and plural forms with and without a hyphen. Events considered

influential on cooperatives were collated and organised under decadal headings before being assigned to a temporal framework of environmental, regulatory and corporatisation sequences (Figure 1). The method extended Mahoney's (2000, pp. 529, 534) path dependence theory and structure based on understanding path dependence as a social explanation derived from identifying processes and sequences within a specific time frame.

Insert Figure 1.

Path dependence sequence developed for cooperatives and corporations building on Mahoney (2000).

Results and Discussion

The Environmental Sequence

During the Industrial Revolution (IR), steam-powered engines mechanised factories and power looms displaced workers in Great Britain. Social dislocation followed with a worker exodus to cities bringing poverty, increased crime, and crowded gaols. Although many countries had previously recorded landfall of the Australian continent, the antecedent reactive sequence of interest commenced when Great Britain claimed the Australian continent in 1770 and established a penal colony in 1778. The speed of settlement was rapid due to manufacturing and transport technology developed during the IR, with a relationship developing based on the exchange of surplus labour for supplies of raw materials and foodstuffs (Lewis, 2006).

The Regulatory Sequence

The British colonisation of New South Wales created a reactive sequence with the introduced common law and statutes resulting in English law underpinning the Australian legal system (Castles, 1963). The introduction of the New South Wales Act (1823) recognised NSW as a colony with a local legislature, and the Australian Constitution Act (No 2) (1850) permitted laws not repugnant to English law to be developed by the colony's legislature (Apps, 2016). The Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900 (IMP) heralded change with the six British colonies uniting as a single federated nation. Under the new Constitution, the states retained their power to control trade and commerce, thus enabling cooperative federalism.

The Corporatisation Sequence

A series of events spurred corporate law reform; Australia's global engagement, currency crises, the deregulation of the Australian currency in 1983, and the establishment of international regulatory bodies and standards. A significant reactive sequence developed that altered jurisdictions for cooperative and corporate regulators. The states referred their law-making powers for corporations to the Commonwealth, Corporations Law (Cth) 2001 was promulgated, and a federal regulator was appointed. Around the same time, Cooperatives National Law template legislation retained state regulators allowing inconsistencies between jurisdictions and fragmented legislation to develop (Apps, 2016). These changes were reflected in university textbooks and curricula that taught the new federal legislation, thus reinforcing the primacy of corporations. This trend is evident globally as current university textbooks focus on corporations with limited, if any, discussion of cooperatives (Kalmi, 2007).

Contribution and implications

Over the past two decades, corporations have become the preferred Australian business entity, with registered corporations increasing from 1.2 to 2.8 million. Reinforcing the corporate primacy are university textbooks and curricula that result in graduates more familiar with corporations than cooperatives. Using Mahoney's path dependence sequences demonstrates how regulatory environments can inadvertently influence the development of business entities. This knowledge can inform future policies that provide a supportive and enabling environment for cooperative development.

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Cooperatives as Social Economy Entities Under the New Polish Social Economy Act

Presented by: Bierecki, Dominik Jan

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Organisations: Pomeranian University in Słupsk, Poland

The purpose of the paper is to introduce new Polish regulation on social economy, consider cooperatives (social and workers' cooperatives) as entities of social economy (social enterprises) and indicate similarities between the social economy concept in Polish law and the content of the ICA Principles. The paper shall be prepared by the dogmatic and comparative methods of legal studies. The dogmatic method shall be used in the interpretation of the Polish new act on social economy of 5th of August 2022. The comparative method shall be used in consideration of this legal act with regard to other European laws on social economy.

The findings of the performed analysis shall indicate that the Polish social economy act regulates social and workers' cooperatives as entities entitled to perform activities in the form of social economy. Under this legal act, social economy activities are undertaken for the benefit of the local community in the field of social and professional reintegration, creating jobs for people at risk of social exclusion and providing social services carried out in the form of economic activity, public benefit activity and other paid activity. The social economy act defines principles that gives the rationale for the inclusion of cooperatives in social economy (Caire and Tadjudje, 2019; Fici, 2023).

Accordingly to the Polish act on social economy, the social economy activities are considered as business activities or paid public benefit activity. Under Polish law cooperatives are suited to this tasks since they perform both business and social activity in the interest of its members and also, with regard to social activity, in the interest of members community (Bierecki, 2022 and Bierecki, 2020). Cooperatives should perform activities in the form of social economy resulting in social and professional reintegration by creating jobs in the form of the cooperative employment contract, which is strictly connected to membership in workers' and social cooperatives (Jedlińska, 2016 and Jedlińska, 2020). Also, social economy entities should not be controlled by state or local government. This assumptions corresponds with the content of 1st, 3rd, 4th and 7th ICA Principle. The similarities between social economy regulation and ICA Principles are also present in other European legal systems (Hiez, 2019).

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Aligning social, ecological, and economic values: how agricultural cooperatives combine multiple value propositions

Presented by: Bijman, Jos

Authors: Bijman, Jos (1); De Herde, Veronique (2); Mechri, Aicha (3); Hanisch, Markus (3)

Organisations: 1: Wageningen University & Research, The Netherlands; 2: RSM – Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands; 3: Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, Germany

Aligning social, ecological, and economic values: how agricultural cooperatives combine multiple value propositions

Session co-chairs:

- Jos Bijman (Wageningen University & Research)
- Veronique De Herde (RSM – Erasmus University Rotterdam)
- Aicha Mechri (Humboldt Universität zu Berlin)
- Markus Hanisch (Humboldt Universität zu Berlin)

Conference Theme: "Cooperatives innovating towards ecological sustainability"

Motivation:

Cooperatives are important actors in agrifood systems. Traditionally they supply farm inputs and process and sell farm products. Cooperatives generate benefits through economies of scale, bargaining power, risk sharing and product and market development. However, with the transition towards more sustainability food systems, the role of cooperatives is changing. Members expect additional services that allow them to adopt more sustainable farming practices. In addition, cooperatives are intermediaries between farmers and society, seeking to align the spatial, temporal, and organisational conditions of farming with the societal demands for more sustainable food.

Cooperatives have traditionally been pioneers in equitable distribution of social and economic values by making use of democratically governed collective action institutions. Agricultural cooperatives provide social and economic value for their farmer-members and other community stakeholders. Social value includes the enhancement of farmer empowerment and farm development. In addition, cooperatives support social capital and facilitate educational and cultural formation at the level of the community. Economic value implies a decent income for farmer members as well as for workers in the cooperative.

Improving ecological value is both an opportunity and a challenge for agricultural cooperatives. Being organisations of farmers, cooperatives are fully convinced of the need for ecological sustainability (including biodiversity and soil health) as a crucial biophysical condition for the production of food, feed, and fibres. However, the adoption of ecologically sustainable practices may

imply an increase in the cost of operations which is not always compensated by an increase in revenues (at least on the short term).

One of the key questions to be discussed in this session is the ability of cooperatives to create and distribute multiple types of value. What are the internal and external conditions under which cooperatives are able and willing to develop joint value propositions? What does organisational and institutional theory tell us about these conditions? What cases studies and empirical evidence do we have about the ability of cooperatives to combine the provision of three types of value?

The session will consist of several paper presentations, a feedback on a similar session held at the IASC 2023 conference, and a general discussion. The session is open to contributions fitting within its scope.

A: Can producer organizations impact value chain sustainability? A systematic review

Aicha Mechri, Markus Hanisch, Katrin Martens, Hendrick Hänke

Farmers' organizations are portrayed as propitious for addressing sustainability concerns in a variety of discourses surrounding alternative solutions to the current state of food systems. The systematic literature review is mapping and organizing the body of knowledge on the theme of sustainability effects of farmers' organizations along value chains. This is done by considering the role played by farmer groups along different value chain stages (production, retail, and consumption) and for different value chain types (domestic, export, short, long). Additionally, the paper is exploring the role played by the farmers' organizations in ensuring synergies (instead of trade-offs) among environmental, social, and economic goals as a basis for a transition towards sustainable food systems. The results from empirical and theoretical perspectives contribute to build an analytical framework to enable the future identification of the contribution of farmer's organizations to sustainability.

B. Cooperatives and climate change adaptation: The impact of membership and access to services

Daniel Kangogo, Jos Bijman, Domenico Dentoni and Francesco Cecchi

Cooperatives play a critical role in farmers' adaptation to climate change. However, membership of a cooperative does not necessarily imply access to services that are needed for climate change adaptation. We empirically test the impact of membership in a cooperative and access to its services (such as extension, credit, and sales) using survey data from 792 small potato farms in rural Kenya who differ in their adoption of climate-smart practices. We employ propensity score matching estimation with conditional analysis to causally relate adoption of climate-smart practices to membership and access to specific services. Findings show, first, that cooperative membership has a positive impact on farmers' climate change adaptation. Second, we find evidence that access to sales and credit services are particularly critical for climate change adaptation. Third, while access to extension is per se less impactful, this service catalyses the impact of sales and credit services. From a policy and managerial perspective, these findings suggest that cooperatives and their stakeholders should provide complementary sales, credit, and extension services to their members.

C: Theoretical and empirical approaches grasping the changing roles of cooperatives as vehicles of collective values

Veronique De Herde

This activity provides feedback on a session held at the International Association of the Study of the Commons, Nairobi, June 2023. The session has a similar topic as this ICA session.

D. Other papers fitting the topic of the session

E. General discussion

Beyond elections: the influence of selection methods on organizational governance

Presented by: Billiet, Adrien

Authors: Billiet, Adrien (1); Pek, Simon (2); Dufays, Frédéric (1,3)

Organisations: 1: KU Leuven, Belgium; 2: University of Victoria; 3: Université de Liège

Background

To prevent governance failure and better align organizational decision-making with organizational goals, governance scholars are continuously exploring techniques to attain good governance, whether in corporations (Forbes and Milliken, 1999; Benz and Frey, 2007) or cooperatives (Mondon-Navazo et al., 2021; Basterretxea, Cornforth, and Heras-Saizarbitoria, 2022). Several strategies for improving governance have been explored in research, including studies on board composition variations (Dalton and Dalton, 2011; Zattoni and Pugliese, 2019), the importance of deliberation in corporate governance (Scherer, Baumann-Pauly, and Schneider, 2013; Ferraro and Beunza, 2018), new models of corporate governance (Pirson and Turnbull, 2011) or alternative ways of introducing stakeholder voices (Zeitoun, Osterloh, and Frey, 2014).

A particularly promising approach focuses on the impacts of two decision-making styles in bodies of governance, called political behavior and procedural rationality (Dean Jr and Sharfman, 1993; Ravasi and Zattoni, 2006; Bailey and Peck, 2013). This literature has received some attention because, while it shows that both decision-making styles have their merits, on some occasions excess political behavior is more harmful than its procedural counterpart (Ravasi and Zattoni, 2006) and creates a mismatch between the goals of an organization and the ultimate decisions made (Bailey and Peck, 2013:132). Even more so, when interests of participants are heterogeneous and ownership structures are complex (Hansmann, 1990; Heath, 2011; Basterretxea, Cornforth, and Heras-Saizarbitoria, 2022), the costs of decision-making in an organization are often too high to bear.

While prior work highlights the importance of decision-making styles to good governance, we lack a sufficient understanding of their dynamics and antecedents. Prior work points to antecedents such as the shared mental models of participants, the power relations between them and their individual leadership skills (Bailey and Peck, 2013), but neglects a focus on one element that cuts across most of the literature on governance innovations: the method used to select representatives on boards and other decision-making bodies, which is commonly referred to as "selection methods." While elections are often assumed the default method to select participants, there is much variation that ranges from random selection, (expert) appointment and self-selection. This is important because the method we use to select our representatives can have major impacts on the outcomes of collective decision-making bodies (Fung, 2006). In contrast to other domains such as societal politics (Mallison, 2018), regulation (Besley and Coate, 2003) and the judiciary (Choi, Gulati, and Posner, 2010), the literature on organizational governance remains quasi silent on selection methods.

Aims & methods

In this paper, we seek to address this gap through the lens of role theory, which predicts that individual behavior is shaped by the expectations and perceptions that exist around a certain role (Biddle, 2013). Within bodies of governance, we know that the behavior of representatives is an important ingredient that influences decision-making styles (Bailey and Peck, 2013). Representatives perceive and behave in response to a specific set of role expectations (Lizzio and Wilson, 2009) and in turn, this behavior results in a decision-making style which may be political behavior, procedural rationality or a combination thereof (Friedman and Podolny, 1992; Lizzio and Wilson, 2009). To study this in the real world, we undertake an in-depth interpretive case study (Langley & Abdallah, 2011) of a governance innovation combining different selection methods at Smart, a large French-Belgian cooperative counting 35,000 user-members and 312 employees. Following a series of major governance crises, the organization created a novel decision-making body charged with the important task of solving value-screening issues for new user-members. The selected committee members through a mix of three selection methods: 5 randomly selected user-members, 2 appointed external experts and 2 appointed self-selected employees of the cooperative. This blending of three methods makes this committee an ideal context to study the impact of selection methods on decision-making styles in governance bodies.

Results and discussion

Our analysis suggests that one crucial ingredient explaining the diversity of individual behavior of representatives is the very way they are selected. To be precise, our study suggests that appointed self-selection and expert appointment reinforce or amplify the behavior of representatives because they create a strong sense of legitimacy and accountability. Random selection, in contrast, dampens the behavior of representatives because it leaves representatives with no sense of legitimacy or accountability. While all of these effects have several (dis)advantages, we theorize that in some cases amplified behavior may trigger a decision-making style that is excessively political, which negatively impacts organizational governance.

Contributions & implications

We contribute to the literature in three distinct ways. First and most importantly, we provide a novel way of understanding and improving organizational governance through selection methods (Fung, 2006) by extending our knowledge about what defines decision-making styles (Bailey and Peck, 2013). Second, we confirm and extend several theoretical claims about selection methods, and in particular the use of random selection (Zeitoun, Osterloh, and Frey, 2014; Pek, 2021) which, we argue, has often been praised for the wrong reasons. Last, we add a new dimension to representational role theory (Alpert, 1979) by showing how different role expectations may lead to ambiguities that reflect quantitative differences instead of qualitative ones, which is important for anticipating the behavior of representatives.

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What history can teach us about cooperative innovation

Presented by: Boscarello, Samuel

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Background

The global economic crisis of 2007-'09 spurred academic interest towards alternative enterprise models rather than those focused on the maximization of profits. Such collective reflection shed a new light on the cooperative movement, also encouraged by the UN declaration of 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives. Historians did not make an exception: in recent years, several valuable essays analyzed the global-scale development of the cooperative movement throughout the last two centuries (Hilson, Neunsinger and Patmore 2017; Balnave and Patmore 2018; Webster 2019). Nevertheless, a history of cooperative innovation is still to be written: how did cooperative practices migrate from one place to another? What kind of transformation did they face to adapt to the needs of different communities? Who were the protagonists of cooperative innovation, under a social and cultural perspective?

Aims

Answering these questions could provide important insights about our understanding of the dynamics underlying social innovation, as some scholars tried to do yet (McGowan, Tjörnbo and Westley 2017; see also Boscarello 2022). Moreover, a deeper historical knowledge is undoubtedly useful to raise awareness of cooperation in the public opinion, tackling long-lasting prejudices and false myths hampering the progress of the cooperative movement – especially within the younger generations. These are precisely the reasons why I spent the last three years on the research project “The European Social Laboratory. Transnational Networks and Local Practices of the Cooperative Movement (1848-1895)”, aimed at reconstructing the path which gradually led from the earlier, scattered cooperative experiments to the creation of the ICA. My hypothesis, indeed, was that innovation processes, such as the transfer of knowledge and technologies, did play a major role in shaping the networks and identity itself of the global cooperative movement.

Methods

My research was carried out by using a historical methodology. However, first of all, why focus on the 19th century? Actually, apart from some obvious differences, that age shares several interesting analogies with our times: an intense period of globalization and technological progress, whose impact on people was profound both on the social and ecological point of view – such as new forms of poverty and the outbreak of pandemic diseases, like cholera (O'Rourke and Williamson, 1997).

I individuated a number of pioneering cooperatives in different sectors – such as credit, production and retailing – and I studied the social, economic and political context where they were developed, as well as the connections they established with other communities. To obtain the necessary information, I analyzed thousands of archival sources mainly stored in the UK, France and Italy. 19th-

century cooperative journals have been other fundamental sources, wherein it was possible to retrieve notices about statutes, financial statements and relationships established by cooperators. In this sense, I found that the enterprises which managed to establish international connections were characterized by a higher degree of innovation, since they were exposed to heterogeneous kinds of cultural influence. Therefore, I proceeded by thoroughly mapping innovation networks among cooperators in Europe, as well as in other continents – such as Oceania and the Americas.

Results and discussion

The outcome of the research showed two main facts:

The pivotal role of politics in spurring cooperative innovation – especially by pushing governments in removing fiscal and legal constraints, or implementing social clauses in public procurement. Mass mobilizations constitute a positive factor, as well: for instance, an unprecedented diffusion of cooperatives in Europe occurred during the 1848 democratic and liberal movement.

The ICA itself was the result of a process of cooperative innovation. Its founders, indeed, constituted at any effect a transnational epistemic community of social innovators, operating at the boundary between business, political and intellectual activity: it was precisely such commitment that gradually shaped cooperative identity, urging cooperative leaders to create an institutional framework through which they sought to reform the 19th-century globalization from inside.

Contribution and implications

The 19th century was the cradle of the modern cooperative economy. In this regard, some of the obstacles of cooperation appeared for the first time in that early age: prejudices, hostile lobbying by business competitors, the existence of fake cooperatives. However, the cooperative movement managed to become a pillar of the global economy: making people aware of this fact would be a useful strategy to counteract those narratives depicting cooperatives as an inefficient and outdated form of enterprise. In Italy, for instance, some scholars and cooperators are trying to disseminate such knowledge through the Podcast of the Cooperative Business (<https://tinyurl.com/coopodcast>) – promoted by Legacoop Romagna – of which I am a collaborator.

Besides, historical knowledge provides us with a surplus of imaginative capacity to design solutions for the social needs. Several case studies, in fact, show how the readaptation of models from the past, or the remodulation of local ancient communitarian traditions, often became the triggers for the development of cooperative practices.

Last but not least, cooperative leaders in the 19th century showed a particular attitude toward globalization, which is worth rediscovering. The ICA was born from the idea that cooperatives should exercise a peaceful and fair global leadership as an organized movement. Likewise, the present challenges to the world order – environmental crisis, war, social exclusion – urge cooperators to make an effort for cultural leadership in our societies. In an age when even the Davos Forum calls for a transition to a purpose-first economy, what should be the response of the cooperative movement?

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Sustainable Social Innovation in the Social and Solidarity Economy Sector (ESS) How could Colombia get out of the crisis?

Presented by: Cárdenas Damian, Diego Fernando

Authors: Cárdenas Damian, Diego Fernando; Cárdenas Rodríguez, Luis Fernando

Organisations: Canapro, Colombia

Background

The Social and Solidarity Economy (ESS) is recognized, among others, for its criticism of the rationality of liberalism, by demonstrating that collective and mutually beneficial economies can exist and generate positive surpluses in the market economy. The "Charte de l'économie sociale" recognize them for the distance they take from the public sector and for, given the democratic functioning and management and equality of rights and duties of the partners, their practice in a special regime of ownership and distribution of profits, using the surpluses of the year for the growth of the entity and for services to the community (Monzón, 2010).

The ESS is considered a sector of the economy that has a critical reading of development due to the excessive individualization and destruction of the environment that it requires. The ESS proposes a business form characterized by cooperation, where the public is considered a common heritage to achieve a better quality of life, thereby representing a sociocultural and political project for the construction of an economy that should include everyone (Coraggio, 2009).

However, the current socioeconomic crisis generated by the appearance of Covid-19 requires an SSE sector that not only recasts the dominant economic rationale but also leads, with the support of other sectors, real development and well-being programs for the territories that allow overcoming poverty and extreme poverty as well, following criteria of sustainability and an ecocentric vision of development.

Aims

Identify aspects of the Sustainable Social Innovation methodology that strengthen the action capacity of the SSEs, thereby enabling the leadership of true development and well-being programs that allow poverty and extreme poverty to be overcome.

Propose a course of action for the SSE sector with a greater commitment to society as a whole, with which it can manage alternative development for the country and the region, addressing the scenario of deepened socioeconomic crisis after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Methods

The article uses the bibliographic review as a research method and feeds the discussion through the practice and analysis of semi-structured interviews with personalities and organizations of the country's SSE. The analysis is grounded through a Case Study of the Canapro Cooperative, an

organization that belongs to the SSE sector of Colombia and to which the course of action mentioned above is proposed.

Results and Discussion:

In Latin America, the principles of the SSE have specialized, according to Coraggio (2014), addressing a lack of agents that manage to materially satisfy "basic needs, a great inequality in access to scientific-technical training and a stigmatization of the poor by the middle classes, which hinders the development of symmetrical solidarity relationships that cross the social spectrum" (p. 2).

The principles and practices of the ESS provide a proposal to fulfill the immediate needs, for the sustainability and equality of the organizations, and to strengthen the processes of social and productive integration. Through criticism of excessive individualization and the destruction of non-renewable resources typical of the current economic rationality, the ESS approaches what is proposed by Sustainable Social Innovation in the interest of the production of strategies and synergies necessary to generate social changes, and by the knowledge generated for the understanding of frugal markets and the inclusion of traditionally marginalized actors in innovation processes.

The SSE sector must rethink its role in Colombian reality, where more than half of the people do not have food security, 60% are unemployed or informally employed, and access to health is established according to income level. The SSE must use methodologies that seek to produce disruptive changes in society, shifting attention to the simultaneities, complementarities, and compensations that occur when satisfying human needs (Max-Neef, 1993), and assuming this task of leading welfare policies for the Colombian population.

Contributions and implications

A Sustainable Social Innovation is proposed, due to the interest it places in social structure changes, which face the barriers and hostility of the old order (Abreu, 2011) that is not thought of on a Human scale. Sustainable Social Innovation makes it possible to enhance the social purpose of the SSE, by proposing the use of various knowledge, social participation strategies, and network actions for its transformation, according to the level of change and the degree of novelty required (Havas, 2019).

With the concept of sustainability, we want to present to the SSE a framework to face the idea of growth as an end, and the principles of profitability and efficiency typical of traditional development and anthropocentric rationality. Social innovations must turn to assumptions such as the protection of nature, the eradication of poverty, and adequate access to services by the population, objectives close to the ecocentric rationality proposed by sustainability.

These frameworks contribute to the SSE and can strengthen its social objectives, by requiring the participation of people involved and the validation of local or traditional knowledge for environmental protection and social justice, with which true participatory and consultative development strategies can be developed. that require the co-production of solutions, as well as the use of appropriate and locally adapted technologies to generate well-being.

The proposal would imply that the SSEs approach the recent framework of "Good Living" as an alternative to the ideology of progress, nourished both by elements of the worldviews of different indigenous peoples of the region, and by the contesting and marginalized traditions of Latin American territories. (Gudynas, 2011).

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Cooperatives and “compound crisis” in the “Global South”: the case of Rwanda

Presented by: Carlier, Célia

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As in many African countries, cooperatives are old structures in Rwanda. They were imposed by Belgian colonization and were intended to satisfy the various colonial interests. (ICA, 2019; Mukaragwiza, 2010). From the independence of Rwanda, cooperatives have played more of an economic development accelerator role (ICA, 2019; Mukaragwiza, 2010).

Rwanda can teach us a lot about cooperative dynamics in Africa. Previous studies have examined the effects of economic crises on cooperatives (Allen & Maghimbi, 2009; Carini & Carpita, 2014). Others have highlighted the resilience of cooperatives in crisis situations (Birchall & Ketilson, 2009; Francesconi et al., 2021). Moreover, researchers focused on resilience (Dushimirimana et al., 2014; Musahara, 2012) (especially for genocide widows [Kappus, 2012]) and reconciliation enabled by these same structures after the genocide. Overall, research on resilience in Rwanda appears to be limited to genocide itself (Dushimirimana et al., 2014; Military et al., 2013), even if recent research has focused on Rwanda's resilience to the COVID-19 pandemic (Louis et al., 2022). Therefore, there have been no studies examining how Rwandan cooperatives are actively tackling the various crises affecting them and constituting serious challenges to cooperative life beyond genocide, nor have those studies emphasized contradictions and power relations crossing both the governance and the life of these structures more broadly. However, our field survey focusing on agricultural cooperatives in Rwanda shows that these cooperatives are facing various crises. Therefore, this empirical reality requires us to think of these crises as a “compound crisis” and then, to try to understand how innovation operates in this complexity and in a constellation of power relations and how resilience can be seen there. It is to this question that this research will attempt to answer: it aims, on the one hand, to highlight that agricultural cooperatives in Rwanda are established in an instrument of resilience to several crises. On the other hand, a critical perspective of this cooperative implementation is developed. This qualitative study is based on thirty semi-structured interviews with members, group leaders and leaders of three agricultural cooperatives located in two districts close to Kigali in 2022. Interviews were also conducted with several local administrators, project managers and engineers. Moreover, various official documents were mobilised and analysed.

This research highlights that agricultural cooperatives are an instrument of resilience. They are intended to rebuild the country and consolidate peace by recreating national unity. To implement a “new development”, they must overcome crises by intervening in several fields: governance, agriculture, gender, education/training, savings, health, etc. Agricultural cooperatives are therefore a fundamental tool for implementing nationally and internationally the political agenda.

From a human perspective, cooperatives can create (or strengthen) “bonds”. From a more tangible perspective, specific measures are taken to tackle several of these crises. Regarding agriculture, cooperatives enable economies of scale and thus, make Rwanda regionally and internationally more

influential (by reversing power relations). Moreover, projects are being established to tackle climate change and its effects or to ensure food security of beneficiaries. Furthermore, membership in an agricultural cooperative implies, through various processes, membership in social security schemes. In addition to tackling social and health crises affecting the country, these measures help to strengthen its “tangible” resilience.

Although agricultural cooperatives have been established as an instrument of resilience, the expected objectives are sometimes undermined by “resistance” – from farmers or cooperative leaders, public policies (and thus the functioning of agricultural cooperatives – dictated by West) not meeting their personal interests. These represent a real challenge regarding the objectives pursued through cooperatives, since they disrupt the resilience process that began after the genocide.

While Rwanda is trying to “recreate” a certain union within it, the lack of inclusion of the population in decision-making processes can have the opposite effect – as the various forms of “resistance” can create tensions and thus, “disunity”.

While it has already been proved that cooperatives can help to consolidate peace and to tackle various crises, the specific case of Rwanda can tell us more about the relationship between cooperatives and crises. As part of an “imported” model from the North (often imposed on populations), the power relations that take place in their implementation, must be considered to fully understand the Rwandan resilience process – the way the country and its inhabitants rebuild.

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Resilience and solidarity through cooperatives: Lessons learnt during the pandemic crisis in India

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Resilience and solidarity through cooperatives: Lessons learnt during the pandemic crisis in India

Neha Christie, Darshna Mahida, P.K. Shajahan

Background

The concept of resilience emerged while there were debates concerning sustainable development. Later, new understandings grew towards social resilience that included the aspects of socio-economic, governance, and human-nature systems (Lang, 2011). In this paper, social resilience has been discussed as a product of solidarity and collective action through the cooperative model during the pandemic crisis.

In India, a considerable population resides under the label of marginalized; the condition of small farmers and migrant labourers is the most vulnerable. As per the study, most agriculture farmers reported negative impacts on production, sales, prices and incomes during the pandemic. Among all, 80% of farms reported a decreased sales ratio, and 20% reported devastating failures by selling almost nothing. The income from the farm was reduced by more than half for 60% of farms (Harris, et al., 2020). On one side, the global crisis has its negative impacts, while on the other side, it has generated new possibilities, learning and ideas for the way forward. In the case of India, the role played by local interventionist institutions like cooperatives (Górriz-Mifsud, et al, 2016) has created an environment of hope, empathy and solidarity across the nation. According to Dutta and Fischer, (2020), It has also given new lessons and evidence to prove the present need for decentralization and developing sustainable solutions to save the rural economy in the country. In this situation, cooperatives have set a great example to function as a source to provide security, solidarity and strength to rural communities. Looking at the advantages of the cooperative model,

Aim

The paper discusses the cooperative model for its role in ensuring communities' social resilience and abilities in promoting community participation, integration, distributing resources and gaining sustainability (Tailor Gooby, 2004). It focuses on the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of the cooperative system responsible for resilience and solidarity development in the community. The paper refers to the institutional theory explaining the role of the institutions and the necessity to deal with the change effectively. It rationalizes that it is the need of the hour that the country should invest in developing local institutions that involve strong people's participation (Christie, 2020). The paper

highlights the significant role of dairy cooperatives of Gujarat state in India during the global pandemic crisis.

Methods

The paper followed a qualitative research approach by interviewing 52 dairy cooperative members across eight Dairy Cooperative Societies (DCSs) in the Anand district of Gujarat state through a purposive sampling technique (Creswell, 2009). The selection criteria for DCS included the registration period, membership type, milk procurement capacity and geographical distance. The sample selection of the members included chairpersons, secretaries and active members. The secondary data was collected through the annual reports, news articles and other literature available in the public domain.

Findings

The findings of the study are focused on the performance of the cooperatives in providing resilience, generating solidarity and accountability among the community members, ensuring stability against the unorganised sector, empathetically handling micro to macro supply chain management, and, providing economic security and community welfare initiatives to deal with the crisis. During the crisis, the cooperatives could function with cooperation and necessary precautions. Every day, the milk was supplied very carefully from the village dairy cooperative societies (VDCs) to district milk unions and to all the urban regions of the states. The dairy cooperatives procured even more milk during the lockdown phase as the unorganized sector stakeholders were passive due to the shutdown of hotels and restaurants. The milk cooperative handled the situation with excellent collaboration and moderated the supply chain. Almost all the milk producer farmers claimed to receive money regularly. The dairy cooperatives were also involved in social welfare activities supporting many covid-19 positive patients. The cooperatives also supplied necessary materials for the safety of the milk producer members and maintained sanitisation throughout the value chain.

Discussion

The discussion section of the paper addresses the current requirements of the cooperative sector as suggestions to the new ministry of cooperation in India to deal with the post-pandemic era more effectively. These suggestions include the requirement of charismatic leadership, moderating members' networks, including small farmers and marginalized populations in cooperatives and dealing with social capital while promoting the cooperative model. Forming effective policies for passive cooperatives, handling global competitiveness, improving the infrastructure in interior regions, relaxation in government restrictions, handling large unorganized sectors, promoting product diversification and effective marketing strategies are a few agendas that need to be in priority.

Contributions

Due to the networking and solidarity abilities, the dairy cooperatives have united the rural population to survive during the crisis. It has proved that local institution-building strategies can guard the farmers of India and their rights. The cooperative model can function as a savior if governed through a robust monitoring system.

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Are cooperatives able to catch inner areas opportunities? The Italian case

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The demographic decline of inner areas is a phenomenon that, especially in recent decades, has reached significant dimensions in many European countries and the world. The paper discusses the contributions of cooperatives in inland areas of Italy. These areas were identified by ISTAT (Italian National Institute of Statistics) on the basis of the accessibility to the main centres, termed Poles, where essential services, represented by education, health and mobility, are located.

Starting from a description of the specific context of inland areas considering both their potentials and weaknesses, the research analyses how cooperatives address the challenges specific to these territories by offering solutions and perspectives. The methods used for the research are both quantitative and qualitative.

From a quantitative point of view, the presence of cooperative enterprises in Italian inland areas will be analysed in relation to other forms of enterprises. The results will help us to empirically explain if the cooperative form is actually more efficient in responding to the needs of the populations in areas where, for opposite reasons, the welfare state and the logic of profit do not manage to reach. For qualitative analysis, instead, the research makes use of methods from semi-structured interviews with the analysis of texts (e.g. websites and documents suggested by the interviewees, semi-structured interview).

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Inherently instable? An analysis of the organizational diversity of the sharing economy and the comparative performance of community-based platforms.

Presented by: Cossey, Jozef

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The rise of the sharing economy initially raised high hopes as it promised collaborative and democratized action, at a large scale, capable of addressing a variety of societal and environmental concerns. However, this early optimism seems misguided as increasingly commercial sharing economy platforms have become contested for their negative societal consequences and the ambiguity of their environmental impact. Following Acquier et al. (2017), this paper identifies two elements namely, operating a digital platform and adhering to community-based governance, to conceptualize three subgroups making up the organizational diversity of the sharing economy. Using a comprehensive geographic mapping, this paper empirically analyzes and nuances the claims made in the existing literature on the implications of the sharing economy's organizational diversity, particularly for community-based platforms. First, the paper examines the extent to which these organizations are able to embed their societal mission in their governance. Subsequently, through a mixed-methods research, we examine whether or not the inherent instability thesis is empirically supported by comparing the strategic outlook of community-based platforms on the three main challenges that have been argued to cause their instability - funding, scaling, and competition - relative to access-platforms and community-based initiatives.

Cooperative associations: frameworks of distributed leadership for collective digital innovation

Presented by: Cousin, Louis

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Background

Cooperative associations can be characterized as meta-organizations: their members are themselves organizations, rather than individuals (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2005). They assume a dual function of stabilization and change (Harter & Krone, 2001). Firstly, a cooperative association is established to organize and stabilize relationships among its members (e.g.: principle of inter-cooperation), but also between its members and their external environment (e.g.: public relations and advocacy) (Valente & Oliver, 2018). A cooperative association's second function consists of fostering adaptation to external environment's mutations, by stimulating change and innovation among its field (e.g.: programs of cooperative entrepreneurship) (Berkowitz, 2018; Steinfield et al., 2005).

Since cooperative associations don't have a hierarchical relationship with their members, conducting a change strategy entails mechanisms which fundamentally differ from primary organizations (Gulati et al., 2012). Typically, conceiving change as driven by an individualistic, heroic, and visionary leader is hardly applicable to a cooperative association. Cooperative associations may rather be viewed as frameworks of distributed leadership. Distributed leadership refers to a change process distributed among several organizations and across their respective boundaries, to reach a common goal (Denis et al., 2012).

Aims

Although apparently relevant to study change within the framework of a meta-organization, we noted that, to our knowledge, current studies in distributed leadership are yet to integrate meta-organizations in their conceptual frameworks. Conversely, meta-organizations' leadership capabilities are yet to be theorized (Berkowitz et al., 2022).

Our research aims to address this knowledge gap by proposing a theoretical model to identify mechanisms allowing and preventing the emergence of a collective digital project within the framework of a cooperative association. The theoretical model will be founded upon three key theoretical bricks:

- The concept of distributed leadership, as proposed by Denis et al. (2012) and Huxham and Vangen (2000);

- The concept of meta-organization, as proposed by Ahrne and Brunsson (2005) and which is being extensively mobilized by researchers to study innovation governance frameworks (Berkowitz, 2018; Berkowitz et al., 2022);
- The perspective of situated change applied to inter-organizational information systems, as proposed by Reimers et al. (2014) and which focuses on inter-organizational practices of collaboration.

Methods

We will conduct an exploratory comparative case study. Studied cases will be two social economy meta-organizations in Quebec which have conducted a digital strategy involving their members. One meta-organization will be a cooperative association, and the other will be a federation representing non-profit organizations (organismes à but non-lucratif).

Data will be collected through individual semi-structured interviews. Our sample will include meta-organizations' staff members, member organizations' staff members, and partner IT providers. Data will be triangulated with documentary research.

Identified factors will be categorized among two dimensions (leadership media and leadership activities). Such a categorization will allow us to reveal mechanisms at play in a distributed leadership process.

Results and discussion

This research is expected to produce two sets of results. Firstly, we intend to identify contextual factors enabling and preventing the emergence and performance of leadership practices within meta-organizations' environments. Secondly, we aim to highlight activities conducted by leaders, and more specifically how such activities capitalized or activated previously identified factors.

Our results will be presented in tables displaying a succession of events, and accordingly the factors which were involved in the leadership process. It will be supported by a narrative, allowing the reader to have a comprehensive understanding of leadership processes at play.

Discussion is intended to focus on specificities of a distributed leadership leading to an inter-organizational information system in a meta-organization's context.

Contributions and implications

From a theoretical point of view, our theoretical model aims to help researchers in considering meta-organizations' capabilities to better understand leadership mechanisms at play in the emergence of a collective, inter-organizational digital innovation. This might be relevant for the emerging research streams aimed at theorizing meta-organizations' roles; and for researchers focusing on the emergence of inter-organizational information systems.

From an empirical perspective, we intend to contribute to the advancement of knowledge about cooperative and social economy digital innovation. More specifically, we would like to highlight in which context and how principle 6 "cooperation among cooperatives" can be operationalized through the collaborative framework offered by cooperative associations.

Finally, this research may help managers of cooperative associations to design and implement change strategies engaging their members in a collective digital project. Managers could especially be more able to identify among their existing environment factors which might positively or

negatively influence the emergence of new digital projects; and conduct activities to support the development of resulting initiatives.

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Cooperative democracy, members' assemblies and IT

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Background: some jurisdictions, such as the Spanish (Basque Country, 2020) and the German ones (2022), have put into force law reforms in order to permit – as normal, not exceptional law (i.e. even after the COVID-19 pandemic period) – virtual members' assemblies among cooperatives.

Aims: reflect on how the cooperative democracy and assembly participation may change thanks to (or because of) the IT and when the IT applied to assembly participation may change some traditional tools to promote members' participation (as the delegates' assemblies).

Results and discussion, contributions and implications: which cooperative organ and how may decide to convene an assembly in a virtual manner? What does it mean a virtual assembly? Should the cooperative's statute guarantee the real assembly as the only or at least possible instrument of real democracy? Is it still useful the direct (eventually virtual) democracy/participation in large cooperative or is it better the indirect (but real) democracy/participation in order to monitor better cooperative managers? Is the IT members' participation at the consultive level be implemented and increased in order to have better management decisions?

I want to analyse assemblies and consultation via IT, as applied to community-based cooperatives, such as energy cooperatives.

I want to reflect on the limits – for the law makers and for the cooperative themselves (i.e. their regulations, in particular, its statute) – in implementing virtual participation at the members' assemblies. For example, is it compatible with the cooperative democracy a virtual meeting only, eventually laid down into the cooperative statute as the unique way of deciding? With the virtual assembly does it make sense the delegates' assembly? How to combine virtual presence at the assembly and the possibility for cooperative members to be represented into the assembly (via proxy votes)? What are the differences between voting in written or virtual way within the assembly and voting, necessarily in written or virtual way, outside the assembly?

All above legal questions I would like to examine in my paper.

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Emanuele Cusa, Cooperative democracy, law and IT, forthcoming

Proposal for developing an international project about education and training in cooperative innovation

Presented by: de Iscar de Rojas, Paula

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Youth unemployment continues to present high rates in EU member countries. Cooperatives are forms of enterprise especially suitable for creating employment for young people, either by integrating them into existing ones or by promoting their creation. On the one hand, many cooperative business projects can be carried forward without a significant capital contribution; in addition, the cooperative formula offers organizational flexibility especially suited for young people and women. On the other hand, its values and principles make it more attractive to those who begin to put their ideals into practice; and make it "a tough and viable business model that can thrive even in difficult times." (FAJARDO, 2011) By creating their cooperative enterprises, adapted to local needs, young entrepreneurs encourage economic development in their community, simultaneously contributing to their development of individual skills and abilities.

For all these reasons we present in this paper a proposal for an international project, whose main aim is to promote the cooperative model in Europe by empowering young people as a privileged way of tackling youth unemployment. This project, led by researchers and experts in cooperatives law from different countries, wasn't funded despite being positively rated. The project focuses on the promotion of cooperative entrepreneurship as a way of accessing the labor market, by considering that youth unemployment is a potential catalyst for entrepreneurship. Cooperatives represent an important socio-economic model in the UE and several parts of the world, by promoting democracy in the labor market and the community, emancipatory relations, cultural diversity, and social justice. Education and training thus play a critical role in the inclusion of vulnerable groups in the labor market, such as young people (SENENT, 2004).

The general objective is to improve the knowledge of the cooperative business formula for young people, to encourage among them the cooperative option as an instrument for the generation of their own jobs (RODRÍGUEZ, 2018). To do it, we propose to develop training modules for secondary and higher education teachers and other trainers, integrating entrepreneurship and innovation in cooperatives in their teaching-learning processes.

The specific goals will be to enhance teachers/educators' ability to teach cooperative entrepreneurship or use different entrepreneurial methods based on the cooperative principles in the classroom both at secondary and higher education levels; and, in the long-term, to increase the onboarding of cooperative business education in European secondary schools / universities.

The project is addressed to the following target: teaching staff, technical assistant staff, and research staff of higher education and secondary schools throughout Europe, willing to try new teaching-learning methods and to share their knowledge and results in a transnational manner.

Taking into account the aims' project and the target, the methodology is to prepare training modules and organize training courses for interested teachers; prepare teaching support materials on cooperative entrepreneurship (documentaries, audiovisuals, interactive, games ...) in formats and with accessible and attractive designs for the student body; identify and make visible examples of good practices in youth cooperatives in the member countries of the European Union; and explore the possibilities of promoting training practices in cooperatives

One of the expected results would be to include cooperative entrepreneurship in secondary and university education curricula. This is fundamental to promote the motivation, training, and qualification of their teaching staff, through the design and development of training activities (workshops, courses, guided visits ...) and materials and tools that facilitate the work (guides and manuals, practical exercises, audiovisual material of diffusion, websites with accessible information

The project contributes to giving professionals (teachers, professors, lecturers) the required material and the most innovative ways to transfer this information to their students. This procedure will increase the entrepreneurial spirit in different regions across Europe. In addition, the different activities proposed, especially the visits to companies and networking with professionals dedicated to the cooperative world in the practice, allow the trainers to verify the success of different cooperative companies, increasing the trust in the model that they may communicate in class afterward. The material proposed will help not only on a specific level in Education, but also could be used in all the educative life, which increase the knowledge about entrepreneurship and will make possible new proposals of cooperativism. Besides it will provide new skills of communication to the trainers and different and innovative resources to be developed in their Jobs.

Additionally, the project will help institutional organizations and political parties to understand the importance of the cooperative model, serving to obtain grants and financial investment in projects based on cooperativism and entrepreneurial initiatives. This project would involve several European universities and different Institutions interested in cooperatives around Europe.

To sum up, this project allows to rise interest in cooperative entrepreneurship in teachers involved in secondary and higher education, create training courses for interested teachers, prepare teaching support materials on cooperative entrepreneurship in formats with accessible and attractive designs for the student body, identify and increase the visibility of good practices in youth cooperatives in the member countries of the EU and explore the possibilities of promoting training practices in cooperatives. Previous practices in collaboration with some European Universities, educators and professors from secondary and higher education, cooperatives and their representative's organizations, and Public Administrations with responsibilities in the promotion of cooperatives.

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Using institutional grammar to understand collective resource management in a heterogenous cooperative facing external shock

Presented by: De Moor, Tine

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Background

Cooperatives' collectively managed resources may deplete due to endogenous threats, like opportunistic member behaviour, or as a result of exogenous shocks, such as economic crises. To prevent this, cooperatives can set up institutional 'rules of the game' aimed at preserving and protecting their collective resources. Recent literature suggests that the design of regulations might help to create shared expectations on cooperation in heterogeneous groups, which would arise more naturally in homogenous groups (Geary et al., 2019). Furthermore, Dehkordi et al. (2021) theorise that institutional response to external shocks in collective resource management depends on whether the shock introduces sudden resource scarcity or an increase in fixed costs, with only the latter invoking institutional change. Tschopp et al. (2018) find institutional change in response to sudden resource abundance. Thus, it remains unclear how institutional arrangements address opportunistic behaviour in heterogeneous groups and evolve in the face of external shocks. This knowledge is crucial for a better understanding of what makes collective resource management resilient when faced with both internal and external impediments.

Aims

We thus formulate the following research question: How are institutional arrangements used to curb members' opportunism in a large and heterogeneous cooperative when faced with an external shock?

Methods

We investigate this question using the explorative case study of Société Mutuelle pour artistes (Smart), which was founded in Belgium as a non-profit association in 1998 to provide freelance artists an employment status with associated labour rights. At present, Smart is a worker cooperative with all kinds of freelancers as its members. Our analysis covers the period from 2017, when Smart officially became a cooperative, to 2022, when the Belgian economy had recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic. Our data consists of Smart's codified rules, such as the bylaws and other rule documents.

Focusing on the design and adaptation of Smart's internal rules, we employ the institutional grammar approach to do a content analysis on its regulative institutions. Introduced by Crawford

and Ostrom (1995), the institutional grammar allows for systematic analysis of how institutions intend, succeed, or fail to structure behaviour. Most of the existing institutional grammar research focuses on institutional structure over meaning, which makes sense for a grammatical approach but it also limits explanatory power. We further develop the institutional grammar's ability to measure institutional meaning at the component-level by integrating various semantic classifications (De Moor et al., 2016; Frantz & Siddiki, 2021; Ostrom, 2005).

Results and discussion

The analysis is still a work in progress, but there are some preliminary results. Based on financial data from Smart, we identify 2020 as the crisis year when collective resources came under pressure due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related lockdowns. Using the institutional grammar analysis, we then find that there is an uptick in institutional change for the year 2020 and that the rules that changed applied for 32% to ordinary members whereas the rules that did not change only applied for 21% to ordinary members. Regulations on member behaviour are thus clearly re-evaluated during an external shock.

Using logistic regression analysis, we also find that rules applied to ordinary members (versus rules that are not) have significantly more often to do with collective resources and require more activation conditions. This supports the idea that cooperatives with a heterogeneous membership use rules to prevent members from overusing or under-contributing to collective resources, but also shows that these rules only apply under certain conditions and are not applied indiscriminately.

Interestingly, barely any of the rules specify a sanction. Instead, using logistic regression analysis, we find that rules applied to ordinary members relating to collective resources (versus rules that are not) more often use modal verbs that obligate certain behaviours. As such, these rules call on members to do their part instead of forbidding or permitting behaviours.

Contributions and implications

The study makes three important contributions. First, it further develops the institutional grammar's ability to measure institutional meaning instead of just institutional structure. This advancement in methodology can also be used to study the institutional arrangements of other types of cooperatives or different types of organisations. Second, the study shows at least some evidence for institutional change during an external shock event that caused sudden resource scarcity. In particular, the institutional change involved a re-evaluation of rules applied to ordinary members of the cooperative. This has implications for theories on how cooperatives adapt to external shocks, which need to take into account a wider variety of external shock types. Third, the study provides support for the notion that cooperatives with a heterogeneous membership use rules to prevent members from overusing or under-contributing to collective resources – especially by obligating them to do their part. Future research is required to assess the effectiveness of such rules in preventing opportunistic behaviour.

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COOPERATIVE CYBERSPACE

Presented by: de Souza, Leonardo Rafael

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Organisations: 1: Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná (PUCPR), Brazil; 2: Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná (PUCPR), Brazil

Background. Probably the most important impact experienced by cooperatives during the Covid-19 Pandemic was the transformation of cooperation as a social action, with an immediate impact on their democratic governance processes. With social isolation, the bases of the social process of cooperation eroded with the intensity of people staying at home, despite being connected. Isolation is a serious opposition to the interaction of individuals, capable not only of deteriorating the organization, but even of deteriorating the group mentally, physically, and culturally, degenerating the human nature of social processes (Schneider, 2019: 84).

Because cooperation is a skill expressed in the ability to understand and be willing to act together, Sennett (2015: 18-19) explains that its development depends on material, institutional and cultural resources capable of promoting this social interaction. However, in a networked society where the homogenization of people is the goal, isolation by technology begins to disable people from the practice of cooperation. The transformation of work and the superficiality of relationships in the digital environment start to generate anxiety and mistrust, eroding the ability to cooperate. This is the core problem of online cooperation.

This was accelerated in the Covid-19 Pandemic because the urgency of social isolation meant that people were quickly inserted into a broad digital environment without due reflection. This is an important risk because digital communication is subjugated by the productive forces that use new information and communication technologies to lead individuals to forced experimentation to the detriment of new cooperation processes (Sennett, 2015: 43).

However, before imagining or proposing processes of social integration of individuals through new information and communication technologies, or thinking about digital processes of democratic governance, it is essential to understand the place where these interactions take place: cyberspace.

Initially thought of as an open space for communication through the worldwide interconnection of computers where digital coding would be able to dematerialize experiences (Lévy, 1999: 92), cyberspace came to be understood from two conceptual perspectives. The first is related to the physical structuring of the communication paths through which information crosses on computers connected to the network. The second considers cyberspace as a virtual reality that enables simultaneous social relationships (Maías & Bravo, 2010).

Cooperatives, in turn, are an association of people who seek to meet common goals through a collectively owned and democratically controlled enterprise. (ICA, 2016). This own identity is also fundamental for us to imagine the cooperative processes of interaction in a virtual environment, that is, to understand the concept of cyberspace in the cooperative context. In this environment, cooperatives must guarantee, based on their bylaws and regulations, the construction of their own cyberspace that considers the economic, social and cultural objectives of their members.

For example, establishing democratic processes in the cyberspace of cooperatives must consider both processes that ensure the cooperative value of democracy and the principle of democratic management, and the development and protection of information systems that give technological support to participation, interaction and truly free decisions, democratic and safe.

Thus, using the inductive method based on a bibliographical and documental review, the aim of the article is to present a concept of cooperative cyberspace capable of bringing together aspects of cyberspace within the cooperative reality. As a result, the concept of cyberspace will allow discussion on how information and communication technologies can preserve both the conceptual bases of cyberspace and the cooperative identity.

A seat at a clean table? Building an inclusive worker cooperative in the Belgian domestic service sector

Presented by: Dessy, Elodie

Authors: Dessy, Elodie

Organisations: HEC Liège, Belgium

Capitalist society relies on two inextricably yet artificially distinct imperatives: profit-making production and social reproduction. Yet, while social reproductive activities are essential preconditions for productive activities, the former remains subordinated to the latter. Building on an essentialist idea of women, capitalist society denies social reproduction's costs and attaches it no or little economic value (Acker, 1990; Benschop, 2021). Parodically, the increased commodification of social reproductive activities following the participation of women in the job market has neither increased their value nor freed women from their care duties. On the contrary, as from early 2000s, European countries have relied on quasi-market mechanisms to subsidize domestic service work (Nyssens, 2015; Carbonnier & Morel, 2015). While it is recognized that subsidized schemes are an alternative to precarious and informal jobs, they remain staffed by subordinated social categories – poor, low-skilled, racialized women (Lens, et al., 2022; Brolis & Nyssens, 2016; Defourny, et al., 2010). Enabling privileged women to offload domestic service work to less privileged women, capitalist organizing principles of social reproduction reproduce intersecting systems of gender, class and race dominations (Arruzza, et al., 2019).

Reaffirming the mutually constitutive character of production and social reproduction and building accordingly organizing principles which foster intersectional equality appear essential for a truly sustainable and inclusive socio-economic transition (Benschop, 2021; Amis, Mair & Munir, 2020). Cooperatives are often portrayed as such alternative non-capitalist organizations. Building on their values of democracy and social justice and on their principles of participatory governance, they strive for their members' inclusion, equality and emancipation (Frère & Laville, 2022; OECD, 2021). However, practitioners and scholars have recently warned that values and principles, if not embodied in actual practices, do not shield cooperatives from gender, class and race stereotypes, dominations and inequalities (Garbarczyk, 2019; Bodet, 2019). A closer look at social economy reveals that it reproduces vertical and horizontal segregations: precarious, low-skilled women form the bulk of the care workforce while leadership positions are occupied by privileged, high-skilled groups (Hillenkamp, et al., 2019; Saussey, 2017; CSESS, 2021).

Either inclusive or exclusionary non-capitalist alternatives, social economy organizations and their relationship with the reproduction of inequalities appear quite ambiguous. As social economy is increasingly framed as a solution to address grand challenges, investigating this ambiguity becomes imperative. Accordingly, the present research asks: How do worker cooperatives ensure inclusiveness of their non-dominant group members in their governance?

To address this question, I conduct an in-depth qualitative case study of the Belgian service voucher scheme. More specifically, I focus on a work integration social enterprise in its process of transforming its governance structure. Owned by legal entities since 2009, this service sector cooperative now aims to transfer part of its ownership to its workers and become a worker cooperative. Within the Belgian service voucher scheme, 98% of workers are women, 46% have little or no qualifications and 24% are not born in Belgium (Goffin, et al., 2018), which makes it an extremely heterogeneous and precarious group. Therefore, this case is a unique opportunity to study the building of a worker cooperative as it attempts to include its non-dominant members in its ownership while operating in a sector entangled with dominations. While the transformation process has just recently started, I believe investigating this case will bring valuable insights on the multiple power systems operating within cooperatives, on the influence of such power systems onto governance structures, on the drivers and barriers to implement participatory mechanisms into a work integration context, and more broadly on the complex relationship between productive and social reproductive activities.

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Innovations in cooperative practices in Africa in the perspective of the 2030 sustainable development goals and beyond

Presented by: Develtere, Patrick

Authors: Develtere, Patrick (1); Nyamongo, Isaac K. (2)

Organisations: 1: KU Leuven, Belgium; 2: The Cooperative University of Kenya, Kenya

Motivation for the session:

It is assumed that social and economic innovation is part of the DNA of cooperative enterprises. At least in theory, ownership and control are in the hands of the very stakeholders (e.g., farmers, consumers, workers, artisans, parents, small businesses). This is helpful to explain why African cooperatives survived the period of instrumentalization in the latter part of the 20th century, during which some of them were subverted by authoritarian and corrupt regimes, as well as the subsequent period of structural adjustment (Hussi, 1993). An ILO-study carried out in 2006 in 11 African countries and published in 2008 found that cooperatives maintained a significant presence all over Africa (with an estimated 7% of the population belonging to one or more cooperatives), regardless of cultural and economic differences between countries and different legacies (Develtere, Pollet & Wanyama, 2008). They however suffered from a lack of visibility due to fragile representative structures (federations and apex bodies). A subsequent ILO-program (CoopAfrica) demonstrated the importance of governments in creating an enabling cooperative-friendly environment as well as the role of donors in forging ties with both domestic and international markets. The need for an enabling environment has been re-underlined in a study on legislation conducted in the framework of the ICA-EU Partnership by the International Cooperative Alliance (cfr. <https://coops4dev.coop>).

As private sector based, member-owned, locally led and networked enterprises, cooperatives have all the assets to thrive in a “glocalized” world and to rebuild and realize a resilient global society (Develtere & Papoutsis, 2021). Cooperatives seem to be particularly suitable actors to initiate transformational change and to realize the SDG ideals of indivisibility and interlinkages. As was echoed during the recent ICA Conferences and General Assemblies (Kigali, 2019; Seoul, 2021), cooperatives want to do this by joining forces with other stakeholders and in particular the other constituents of the social and solidarity economy (micro-credit and micro-insurance organisations, foundations, social enterprises, mutuals and other community enterprises) and social partners (workers’ and the employers’ organisations), as well as chambers of commerce, NGOs, fair trade actors, women’s organizations, local authorities, other businesses, and civil society actors in general. This is in line with the new development paradigm based on the whole-of-society approach.

Cooperatives could be considered champions of the 2030 agenda, due to their key-role in mobilizing their members and the communities at large in realizing that agenda, their innovative governance systems, fields of operation, modus operandi and reach out to other social enterprises and organisations in order to be catalysts for the SDGs. However, since the ILO publication published in 2006 little or no comparative work has been done on the African cooperative sector/movement. It is

fair to say that the cooperative sector in Africa suffers from an acute research and evidence deficit. If the African cooperative movement has to play a really strategic and pivotal role in the run-up to 2030 and the period beyond this twin-problem has to be resolved.

A number of organisations involved or interested in cooperativism have created an alliance to prepare the African cooperative movement for this challenge: the International Cooperative Alliance, the International Labour Organisation, the World Resource Institute, the International Food Policy Research Institute, the Belgian cooperative Cera/BRS and the university KULeuven. The alliance is called COOPSTAR. This dedicated session of the ICA Research Conference can give valuable insights and other input to the COOPSTAR initiative.

With this session we want to bring together scholars interested in cooperative studies in Africa in order to create an evidence base and to stimulate critical thinking about the current and potential role of cooperatives to tackle the sustainability challenges expressed in the SDGs as well as to prepare them for the post-2030 period.

Content of the session

We expect a variety of papers with national perspectives on the role of cooperatives in reaching sustainability goals, with evidence on sectoral strategies of cooperatives in, for example, the agricultural, renewable energy or banking sector, with critical analysis of the interactions between cooperatives and other stakeholders in society and policy-making, or case studies of individual cooperatives and their nature-based approaches to development. We want the session to cover different African countries and to create a transnational view of the cooperative reality in Africa.

Together with the other researchers we will explore ways to cooperate in the COOPSTAR venture.

Proposed format.

We ask panelists to make a short presentation on the basis of a PPT (12 slides maximum). We encourage them to film record a short (two minutes) testimony of a cooperative member concretely showing the contribution of his/her cooperative in tackling a sustainability issue.

Importantly we also want to engage in dialogue with cooperative practitioners. We want to invite cooperators and cooperative development agencies such as Belgian/European cooperatives working with African counterparts, Brussels-based (cooperative) development agencies, ICA staff and others to participate in the session and to share their experience, knowledge and views on cooperative development in Africa.

• Keywords (1 to 5)

Africa, SDGs, transformational change, nature-based strategies, resource preservation and restoration

• Theme(s) (select at most 2 themes)

Resilience, crisis and innovation; cooperatives and sustainable transformational change

Enabling disruptive innovation by cooperatives

Presented by: Douglas, Brett

Authors: Douglas, Brett

Organisations: Avaloq Innovation Ltd, United Kingdom

Background

An innovation is disruptive where a smaller business with fewer resources is able to successfully challenge established incumbent businesses (Christensen et al, 2015).

There is a lack of research about modifications to governance, organizational models and business models required for cooperatives to create disruptive innovations.

Most work on disruptive innovations has been within the framework of competition between non-cooperative companies (Christensen et al, 2018).

Learnings from disruptive innovation theory can be used to modify forms of cooperativism in order to enable cooperatives to create disruptive innovations.

Aims

This paper explores how innovations in forms of cooperativism can enable greater disruptive innovation by cooperatives.

Cooperatives can use disruptive innovations to provide innovative services and products, move into industries where there is currently minimal cooperative presence, and prevent themselves being disrupted by non-cooperative companies.

Methods

The paper is a review of disruptive innovation theory in terms of cooperative governance, organizational models and business models.

The review seeks to answer the question: Which elements of disruptive innovation theory can be used to create new forms of cooperativism that enable disruptive innovation?

The following questions from the conference themes are also addressed.

Theme: Innovations in cooperative governance

How do governance innovations contribute to cooperatives' economic and social performance?

What are the organizational and institutional conditions for governance innovations to arise and be established?

Theme: New forms of cooperativism

What are the contextual and institutional conditions that facilitate the emergence and the success of new cooperative forms?

How are innovative cooperative forms governed and do they face specific challenges regarding governance?

The review of disruptive innovation theory is based on an extensive literature review of the history of disruptive innovation theory (Christensen et al, 2018).

Cooperative governance, organizational models and business models are reviewed within a conceptual framework for approaching research into the cooperative enterprise from a business model perspective (Mazzarol et al, 2014). This framework includes a conceptual architecture of the cooperative enterprise that can be used for guiding research. The framework comprises three levels of analysis focusing on:

Individual member level

Cooperative enterprise level

Macro-environment or 'systems' level

The review also includes information about existing cooperatives' governance, organizational models and business models (Michie, et al, 2017). This information includes details about the different types of cooperatives and how this is expressed in different forms of cooperativism.

Based on a review of research literature relevant to the theory of disruptive innovation (Christensen et al, 2018), three key works were selected for this review: (Christensen & Bower, 1996), (Christensen & Raynor, 2003) and (O'Reilly & Tushman, 2021).

From these works, the following elements of disruptive innovation theory are viewed within the above cooperative enterprise framework.

Christensen & Bower, 1996:

Strategic investment decisions and the resource allocation process

Resourcing disruptive innovations unappealing to existing customers

Awareness of nascent disruptive threats

Christensen & Raynor, 2003:

Business model innovations

Identifying which organizational unit is most appropriate to launch disruptive innovations

Creating an autonomous business unit

O'Reilly & Tushman, 2021:

Enacting dual structures, processes and subcultures

Managing conflicts from pursuing different types of innovations simultaneously

Scaling quickly on the basis of innovation and flexibility

The identification of new forms of cooperativism in this paper is similar to the analysis that identified a limitation of existing cooperatives' organizational models, which restricts the industries they can successfully operate in (Douglas, 2022). From the World Cooperative Monitor 2022, 95% of cooperatives and mutuals are in four industrial sectors (International Cooperative Alliance, 2022). The

World Cooperative Monitor data was combined with the Fortune Global 500 data (Fortune, 2021). In this combined list of organizations, these four industrial sectors only accounted for 29% of organizations.

In this paper, investigation is made of whether the above limitation is also a limitation on cooperatives' scalability, and of having an organizational unit appropriate to launch disruptive innovations.

Results and discussion

The features that enable disruptive innovations are drawn upon to propose changes to cooperatives' governance, organizational models and business models in order to enable disruptive innovations.

Contributions and implications

The main contribution from this paper is innovative forms of cooperativism to assist cooperatives seeking to use disruptive innovation.

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The Ralahine Commune and the Politics of Co-operative Land Ownership

Presented by: Doyle, Patrick John

Authors: Doyle, Patrick John

Organisations: University of Limerick, Ireland

Ireland underwent a drawn-out social revolution in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as land ownership passed from a landlord class to the tenant farmers (Dooley, 2004). However, the incremental nature of this transition meant that different models of land ownership were drawn upon and debated as politicians of different hues attempted to solve the Irish land question. Among those offering a pathway to success were individuals interested in the model of co-operative land ownership, and they highlighted the precedent of a successful co-operative colony that existed in Ireland in the 1830s to illustrate their arguments.

The Ralahine co-operative society was an Owenite commune formed in County Clare in 1831 in response to an agrarian crisis. John Scott Vandeleur, landlord of the Ralahine estate, had been inspired by the visit of Robert Owen to Ireland in 1823 and organized his property that allowed the tenant farmers to effectively become partners in the management of the estate. He established the commune in response to growing social unrest, which culminated with the assassination of his steward employed to manage the farms and tenantry. The reorganized commune was managed by the community with an elected council drawn from the membership. In its short lifespan productivity increased, farmers invested time and labour upon estate improvements, and new technologies to reduce the workload were introduced. Two years later, the society collapsed when Vandeleur gambled away the property in a private members' club in Dublin. Nevertheless, while the commune only lasted two years and remained unrepeated, the legacy and memory of the social experiment continued to exert a hold over the imaginations of land reformers, nationalists and, co-operators.

Ralahine provided nationalist and socialist intellectuals with a blueprint for shaping a post-independence Irish polity. In 1919, one of Ireland's leading co-operative intellectuals, George Russell, reflected on the historical significance of the Ralahine co-operative society at a moment when Ireland stood on the precipice of an as-yet-to-be-determined form of political independence. Russell believed that the growth of the co-operative movement in the previous thirty years had exerted an irreversible and profound effect on Irish political culture and moulded a population away from the pursuit of individual interests towards those of the community. 'I think it possible', he wrote, 'that the soul of Ralahine may reincarnate speedily in modern Ireland where people almost talk as much about co-operation as about Sinn Féin. They are better prepared for communal activity.' (Russell in Craig, n.d.)

Ralahine represented the only serious effort to organize a utopian community along Owenite lines in nineteenth century Ireland, and curiosity in the experiment grew as time passed. As well as shaping the land debate and the question of what an independent Ireland might resemble, the co-operative ideal of Ralahine also motivated experiments in Irish forestry such as the woods on the Raheen estate and the developmental ideas of Gaelic language activist and nationalist, Bulmer Hobson.

Writing in the 1930s, Hobson envisioned a co-operative approach to forestry as a way to increase the stock of native trees and repopulate Irish language speaking regions of the country. He also argued that the increased amount of wooded land would act as natural environmental defences from flooding (Hobson, 1931). A century later, and the issue of increasing Ireland's stock of woods is envisioned as one pathway towards decarbonization and greater biodiversity, but the co-operative method remains a minor part of the ownership mix.

This paper will examine the intellectual trajectories inspired by the commune as a range of political economists, co-operators, and moral economists tried to promote a co-operative conception of property ownership during this crisis. Examining how they used the example of Ralahine as a practical example on which to build their theories of reform shows how the legacy of Irish Owenism offered a challenge to conceptions of private property ownership. This paper also examines how the memory of Ralahine Co-operative Society shaped debates about the politics of land ownership and how it provides lessons for contemporary crises of capitalism. In particular, how might co-operative approaches towards property and resource stewardship inform approaches to the crises around agricultural production, forestry, and housing in Ireland, and further afield.

The paper utilises a historical methodology to examine how a co-operative experiment in 1830s Ireland is relevant today. This will be achieved through a close reading of political economy texts that were inspired by, and responded to, the example of Ralahine. This will be contextualized with a discussion of issues related to property ownership that exist in Ireland (and elsewhere) today to argue that co-operative models of property ownership offer solutions to crises that stem from an adherence to private land ownership.

The paper will explore several areas:

What influence did the Ralahine commune's model of governance have over the development of intellectual thought around land and property inside and beyond Ireland?

What are the lessons that can be learned from the Ralahine experiment and how might they inform contemporary crises around agriculture and environmental sustainability?

How might Ralahine offer a model for new trajectories of land ownership in the face of our current climate and housing crises. For example, what insights does co-operative land ownership have in the current debate about the future of forestry plantations?

By exploring the memory of Ralahine the paper points to an influential resource of co-operative knowledge that shaped political imaginaries and can still inspire a new politics of land ownership and ecological sustainability.

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The political role of cooperatives and how political activity organizes within cooperatives: The case of the Food Co-op

Presented by: Dufays, Frédéric

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Background

Cooperatives act as the economic vehicles of various social movements such as farmers' movements, women's movements, or more recently fair trade and environmentalist movements (Novkovic & Golja, 2014). The emergence of cooperatives has also been positively related to the presence of social movements in the area, as shown for example in a study of how US agricultural cooperatives were more salient in states with strong anti-corporate movements (Schneiberg et al., 2008). As democratic enterprises, cooperatives often go beyond voting on strategic issues and electing representatives; they seek their members to voice and participate in deliberation (e.g., Cechin et al., 2013). This leaves room for social movements to raise issues on the agenda of the cooperative and to transfer broader sociopolitical debates from the public sphere to the enterprise (e.g., Fonte & Cucco, 2017).

Aims

While their existence is most often justified in economic terms (Levi & Davis, 2008), cooperatives are, like any other enterprise, both political entities (Ferreras, 2017) and political actors (Néron, 2010). As they are embedded in social movements and supported by stakeholders sensitive to their distinctive organizational form, cooperatives rely on their political dimension and their democratic nature to build their legitimacy. In that context, what is missing is a more comprehensive understanding of the link between democratic political processes within and political activity outside the cooperative. Using social movement theory (Weber & King, 2014) and Habermasian communicative action (Habermas, 1987) perspectives, this paper asks: how do societal issues and debates make their way into processes of democratic deliberation inside the cooperative?

Methods

A longitudinal case study (Yin, 2003) of the emblematic Park Slope Food Co-op (Jochowitz, 2001) is conducted on the period 1973 until today. This case is selected because this cooperative acknowledges lively debates on societal issues and how they impact the day-to-day activities of the enterprise with the involvement of members engaged in social movements (e.g., boycott of products for political reasons related to peace movements, selection of suppliers related to fair trade movement and social justice movements).

Data collection includes the bi-weekly internal newspaper, in which summaries of the General member Assemblies and op-ed articles by members and staff on debated issues are published.

Interviews with (founding) members and other documents (press clippings, documentary movies, etc.) will also be collected to triangulate the data.

Results and discussion

Data is currently being analysed.

Contributions and implications

Expected contributions of this research project include a refined understanding of the political role of cooperatives, of their democratic functioning, and of the internal organization of political activity within cooperatives, including by uncovering how social movements can influence the course of action of enterprises from the inside and a theorisation of how these social movements interact within the enterprise. It will also participate in the conversation on cooperatives' embeddedness as well as their role in and contribution to society.

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Energy communities as key actors in energy transition

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Recent events as economic crisis and the military conflict in Ukraine with resultant price increase of electric tariffs have made clear the energy dependence of external sources in many European countries, particularly in Spain. Therefore, it becomes necessary that the whole society (citizens and public authorities) responds to a critical need, to move towards an energy transition. In this context, the European legal framework fosters a new legal form, the energy communities, in order to accelerate the energy transition, where final consumers and public administrations are key elements in order to invigorate the process of energy transition, in the framework of these communities.

Several legislative initiatives have been developed by European Union in recent years, mainly the Directive 2018/2001 and the Directive 2019/944, to the updating of EU energy policy, promoting energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources. Such directives provide that every member state have to establish their national legislative framework in order to develop and boost the energy communities at national level (Fajardo & Frantzeskaki, 2021; Rosa, 2020). One of the main questions to analyse is to define their legal status, since European regulation sets these organizations have to be based on voluntary and democratic participation, pursuing environmental, economic and social community benefits for their shareholders or members, rather than financial profits. These characteristics can be associated with the organizations which form the Social Economy (Artutxa et al, 2022).

In Spain, the transposition of these European regulations into national legislation have been virtually non-existent. There haven't been developed any legal provision specifying the legal status for these energy communities, which allows to develop and foster them (Menéndez y Fernández, 2022).

The aim of this paper is to analyse the legal framework of the energy communities, in order to propose, within the framework of the Social Economy organizations, those legal forms which are able suitable, due to energy communities are emergent and they demand a national legal framework.

One key element is the active participation of citizens (Faja et al, 2021; Martín, 2020), involving them in the changes towards an energy transition which is much needed in European Union. Also, it is necessary the involvement of local authorities (Belda et al, 2022) in the renewal energy projects through energy communities, which generate a significant added value.

In our view, the Social Economy organizations can contribute to shaping the energy communities, because they can address an economic, social and environmental problem, where the open and voluntary participation by the members is an indispensable requirement, as is the case in energy communities. In this sense, the cooperative form could be adopted, because cooperative societies have successfully demonstrated their experience in energy sector.

In sum, energy communities present a development potential in energy sector, fighting climate change and promoting the energy transition and reconversion (Mucha et al, 2021), which is particularly necessary in Spain. However, energy communities are still in their very early stages and require a legal framework at national level in Spain which encourage and promote them. These nascent organizations demand regulation on legal status, constitution, administrative procedures, management, financing, ..., among others questions. Therefore, there is still a lot to be done and the national legislators should provide a legal framework to facilitate, encourage and promote the energy communities, their access to information and financing.

Energy communities must be understood as a valid formula to manage collectively the clean energy projects in a democratic, fair, inclusive, participative and sustainable way.

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Waves of a New Cooperativism from the European periphery: Integral Cooperatives

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Background

Cooperatives are a form of both resistance and alternative to capitalist economic (Wigger, 2016) organization and have been so since their emergence alongside capitalist institutions in the late 18th century, re-imagining the economic role of consumption and work (Fialho, 2021). As with any other human institution, they have faced challenges and exhibited contradictions, to the point that some big corporations today are legally cooperatives with little apparent difference to their capitalist counterpart (e.g. Credit Agricole, Co-op Group UK, some Mondragón Corporation industrial cooperatives whose employees are mostly non-members) when it comes to market behaviour, capital concentration and concrete democratic practices.

Still, cooperatives on average seem to produce a more equal distribution of income and wealth (Goodman, 2020), while they deliver a range of social benefits that corporations, private or public, don't (Perotin, 2016). But how are cooperatives innovating their models and governance to address historic contradictions? We propose looking at a new form of cooperativism: the integral cooperative (IC).

Aims

Cooperatives have existed under capitalism for over two centuries, as part of the communitarian tradition that initially resisted capitalism. We argue that cooperatives, seen as part of a counter-current to capitalism, suffer from variegation in their institutional form and that not all types of cooperatives resist capitalism to the same extent or in the same way. We suggest that the IC is an emerging variety of Cooperativism, specific to peripheric countries, that attempts to address contradictions found in the history of cooperatives (see Enciam, 2016; Pereira, 2019). Drawing on two regional cases of what might be considered successful traditional cooperative forms, the Mondragón industrial group of cooperatives in the Basque Country, Spain, and the vast cooperative network in Northern Italy, such as in Emilia-Romagna, which are estimated to represent around 30% of regional production, we then present the emergence of the IC in Catalonia, Spain, in 2010, its diffusion to Alentejo, Portugal, in 2015, and recently to other Portuguese regions, since 2020, highlighting the institutional variations relative to the Mondragón and Italian cases. While discussing the historical-institutional characteristics of the regions presented, stressing the inevitable manifestations of global neoliberal capitalism as well as the different cooperative responses, we focus on the organizational and governance aspects of these cooperatives, emphasizing the IC's innovation and variegation.

Methods

The method of research is a case-study detailed comparison of some three portuguese ICs (Minga, Regenerativa and Rizoma) two rural and one urban, which are in turn compared at a high-level as a group to the older and larger networks and collections of cooperatives in Mondragon and Northern Italy.

The methodology combines action research, made possible by the author's daily practice as a member of Rizoma Cooperativa Integral and contact with the three organizations through the recently founded Network of ICs (Rede de Cooperativas Integrais). It includes documentary analysis of the cooperatives' records. Participant interviews are conducted with members and outside partners of the cooperatives.

Results and Discussion

An IC is a cooperative that tries to operate in all the branches of social and economic activity that are necessary for basic living. The model originated in Catalonia, with the Cooperativa Integral Catalana and one of its purposes is to blur the differences between producers, consumers and investors, with its members taking on all three roles in interconnected projects that aim to feed off each other in an internal economy.

The long-term goal is to achieve the maximum possible autonomy and self-sufficiency from the conventional economy while maintaining and promoting links with that economy to "infect" it.

Governance is also very different to traditional "single-branch" cooperatives, drawing on anarchist principles of horizontal organization and decision-making, such as decentralized direct action, consent/consensus and mutual support. It enables project and member autonomy while interlinking these at the cooperative level through sectoral and cooperative meetings and bodies.

Most operational decision-making occurs in working groups open to all members and the democratic principle is interpreted as participatory rather than representative democracy. In practice, those that participate in the activities and are affected by the decisions are the ones that make them and many sociocratic patterns are cultivated.

Contributions and implications

The variegated impact of neoliberal capitalism means that cooperatives are neither doomed to failure nor a panacea for it but part of a continuous process of experimentation which does not solely depend on powerful policy actors to be implemented and thus much more flexible and actionable by ordinary people.

New tensions and contradictions emerge from the IC model while former contradictions are resolved:

Market mechanism brought into question during application

Common property accumulated while individual and autonomous projects are developed

Potential for initiative and collaboration increased by the decentralized and participatory nature of the organization, while the workload/pay ratio may increase unduly

Justifying the very localized scale of research: collective social action by most of the population is inevitably local. Social science and political economy would benefit both science and the community by, beyond advising ministers of economy or industrial planners, addressing questions that are useful for and actionable by the population in their local daily lives.

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From a regulation in the statutes to a legal regulation – The long road of the electronic general assembly

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Nowadays, it is hard to imagine the everyday life of cooperatives without virtual general meetings. This is due to the increasing digitalisation of society, and it is due to the experiences we all made during the Covid 19 pandemic. German cooperative law has had its own legal regulation on this since 2022. This article will present the new regulation and trace the path to it.

The start was made by a cooperative whose object was joint hosting and services around the internet (1). The members were all very tech-savvy freelancers from all over Germany. Therefore, the desire arose to hold the meetings electronically as well, especially because most of them worked very flexibly. The law did not offer a solution to this, so a "virtual general meeting" was built into the statutes. This was based on an email list through which all members were reached. In this way, all items on the agenda were discussed in detail before a general meeting (which, according to the law, must be held in presence). Subsequently, a vote was decided on recommendations to the presence assembly. This was then attended by only a few members who confirmed the recommendations of the virtual general meeting. This was time-consuming, but allowed for broad participation of the members.

The next milestone was the Cooperative Act of 2006. Within the framework of this reform, cooperatives were allowed to adopt resolutions of the general assembly in electronic form, if the statutes regulate "the details" of this. (§ 43 Paragraph 7 German Cooperative Act as amended in 2006 (2)).

Even though the law only allowed resolutions to be passed electronically, this was used by many cooperatives for virtual general assemblies. Mandatory was always that the resolution was passed electronically (email, online voting). How the opinion was formed was not regulated by the law, here the "details" were regulated in the statutes. In this way, some (young) cooperatives organised virtual assemblies for many years.

From 2020 onwards, discussions and the use of the virtual general assembly then became more dynamic. This was, of course, related to the Covid 19 pandemic and the accompanying contact restrictions. In order for cooperatives to be able to pass resolutions in meetings, the use of the rules to pass resolutions electronically in general assemblies was released to all cooperatives (3). Now every cooperative could use this way, even if this was not provided for in the statutes.

The next milestone was the decision of the OLG Karlsruhe (Higher Regional Court) . This decision threatened to render all resolutions passed virtually null and void, regardless of whether they were passed with or without a provision in the bylaws. In doing so, the court echoed the view of some

commentators who interpreted the Cooperative Societies Act as amended in 2006 differently. They saw the scope of application as very narrow and in no way a basis for virtual meetings, since "only" virtual resolutions were allowed (4). The cooperatives in Germany were now concerned whether virtual resolutions could still be passed with legal certainty at all.

In a very short time, the legislator reacted to this. The Covid 19 Act was modified to clarify that it is not only electronic resolutions that can be passed, but also virtual general assemblies in which members can exercise their rights. (5)

The Bundesgerichtshof (Federal Supreme Court) reversed the decision of the OLG Karlsruhe, but essentially referred to the new clarification of the legislator in its reasoning. This created legal certainty in the assemblies, taking into account the Covid 19 Act (6).

However, the law was only valid for a limited period until 31.08.2022. From 01.09.2022, the 2006 law would then be the only basis. Because of the doubts caused by the OLG Karlsruhe, there was uncertainty among the cooperatives.

Again, the legislator reacted quickly. For the law of public limited companies (Aktiengesellschaften), there was a draft to introduce a virtual general meeting. During the legislative process, an article for cooperatives was added. The aim was to obtain a new regulation before 01.09.2022. The goal was achieved, and the new Cooperatives Act with a regulation on virtual general meetings has been in force since 27 July 2021.(7)

This new law now offers the definition of different forms in which the general assembly can take place (§ 43b Cooperative Act).

First of all, the presence meeting is mentioned; this is the basic form of the meeting, which is always held if no other form has been chosen. New are now the possibilities for general assemblies to take place in other forms:

- virtual form (without presence),
- hybrid form (mixture of virtual form and presence meeting) and
- time-stretched form (after a virtual / hybrid meeting, a vote is held in writing or electronically with a time delay) (8).

This means that the German Cooperative Act has arrived in the digital age with regard to modern forms of general meetings.

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Cooperatives and SSE Organizations: the decent work contribution to SDGs

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The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequalities in income and widening gaps in labor market opportunities, and exposed existing vulnerabilities in economies, labor markets and societies. As the expectation for new ways of doing business are growing, the SSE, in particular, cooperatives, can provide a basis for a model of enterprise that fosters inclusiveness, sustainability and responsibility.

Background: Corporate responsibility is the fruit of long evolution as explained by Carroll (2015). It is commonly recognized that Bowen (2013), considering that the large corporations concentrated great power and so tangible impact on society, set forth the idea of defining a specific set of principles for corporations to fulfill their social responsibilities. The idea of the responsibility of organizations has gained a strong legitimacy and a rising interest at the national and international levels together with a growing concern for a more responsible, ethical and solidarity society. Different concepts like Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Responsible Business Conduct (RBC) or Business Human Rights (BHR) have appeared in relation with this concern for more responsible business practices.

Nevertheless, the recognition of SSE (Bouchard et al., 2020) as an alternative model, with a large attention to coops, seems participate to this long-term CRS process, achieving the reconciliation of social, economy and environment. different instruments and reporting standards have been produced by international organizations to guide businesses to comply with increasingly global expectations and recommendations. Then guidelines should be addressed for enhancing the positive social and labour effects of the operations and governance of multinational enterprises and other enterprises to achieve decent work for all, a universal goal recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Aim: This communication aims to stress the essential role of cooperatives for their contribution to the objectives of inclusive and sustainable development. For doing so, it clarifies these different concepts including: Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), leading to examine the changing landscape about business responsibility.

Material and method : Our approach is qualitative. We mobilized the existing data and knowledge on the SSE that we have accumulated over the last twenty years from a new perspective. Our materials are based on various reports produced by ILO in the last 10 years. These reports point to different examples and experiments in different countries around the world. They mainly focus on cooperatives. So we have a rich material to take into account the different facets of cooperative contributions at the international level.

Results: We follow the framework provided by the ILO MNE Declaration (2017) which includes four main categories: Employment, Training, Conditions of work, and Industrial relations. These categories

are diversely detailed and each of them differently stress several sub-themes. Our results are detailed in order to stress and illustrate the SSE and cooperatives contribution to each of them.

(1) Contribution of SSE in terms of general employment is therefore significant and even crucial in specific industries like social services, health or education. This contribution includes both the creation of jobs in activities that are not sufficiently addressed by other organizations and the preservation of jobs, especially through worker-owned enterprises or recovered companies (*empresas recuperadas*) such as in Argentina.

In countries where large parts of the economy are still in the informal sector, SSE is considered as a lever for the transition to the formal economy (see in particular SDGs 8–9). The SSE units can contribute to the formalization and growth of micro or small-sized enterprises and promote the social economic and political inclusion of all.

(2) The SSE contributes to the training of workers through both salaried employment and volunteer work. In some SSE law, training is a prominent principle, e.g. in Columbia (Law No. 454/1998 of 4 August 1998 on the Solidarity Economy). More specifically, the 5th principle of cooperatives, as one of the organizational forms of SSE, is training for the members and the community.

(3) The SSE has often been a pioneer in proposing innovative responses to environmental issues both through political activist mobilization (NGOs and other NPOs engaged in criticizing environmental scandals since the 1970s), original business models (organic coops; fair-trade; etc.), and promotion of renewal energies and resources efficiency. In Mexico, the green market in Morelos holds a monthly event offering space to 200 producers selling sustainably produced goods to consumers who care about the environment.

(4) The democratic and participatory governance of SSE units is a vector for stakeholders that are traditionally marginalized or under-represented, including women, to equally participate to governance and decision-making process and power-sharing. The specific governance of SSE, formally organized in the legal statutes, offers an innovative answer to the rising concern for an extended governance which should not be limited to shareholders but also include other stakeholders and especially the workers.

Discussion and implication: The requirement to take into consideration the three pillars of sustainable development, inevitably questions the forms of cooperative model and their adaptability, but also their purpose, combining their social principle and the new societal requirements (Defourny and Nyssens, 2021; UNRISD and GSEF, 2018). By putting the environmental dimensions and the urgency of transitions at the heart of their social reason, cooperatives, including SCOPs and SCICs, are questioning the bases of their model, i.e. the methods of exercising participatory democracy and the attestation of proof.

The boundaries and linkages between CSR and SSE oblige to think about the cooperative model face with transitions for a more inclusive and sustainability society. Cooperatives reinforce the idea to mobilize CSR regarding the latest social expectations of generating shared value as a main business objective however including various dimensions [68].

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The case for a cooperative in Quebec to value local wool for the fashion industry

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Abstract

Background

The fashion industry is considered the worst polluting industry on the planet (Greenpeace 2012; Swedish Chemicals Agency, 2013; GOTS, 2016; Global Fashion Agenda & Co, 2017; ECAP, 2018; Šajin, 2019, Pal and Gander 2018). The fashion industry's pollution comes, primarily, from the waste in upstream activities. Upstream activities take place at the beginning of the fashion industry's supply chain, such as the sourcing and production of fabric fashion-on-climate-full-report.pdf (mckinsey.com) Page 63-52.

An example of waste during upstream activities in a fashion supply chain (and the context for this study) is the case of Canadian wool. According to Deschênes-Gilbert (2022), Canadian farmers shear their lambs and sheep only to get rid of the fleece, so the animals do not suffocate before being slaughtered. The fleece is either discarded in landfills, burned, or sent to the Canadian Co-operative Wool Growers Limited (CCWG) in Ontario, where 90% of the wool is exported, as a non-value added commodity. Only 10% of Canadian wool is consumed in Canada (History of wool in Canada Canadian Co-operative Wool Growers Limited).

Aims

To address this problem, we will interview the various actors responsible for different processes along the potential local wool supply chain. We will also observe practices and obtain documentation to support our interview data. This will provide a detailed description of each stakeholder and process so we can determine Key Performance Indicators (KPI) (financial and non-financial) for each process. We will then know the different potential actors and processes that would be necessary to source and transform locally produced wool for the Canadian fashion industry.

With this knowledge of the various actors and processes, we will propose a cooperative organization comprised of key knowledgeable decision-makers. The objective of this cooperative will be to build a viable business case with best practices of local wool production. These best practices will serve as an educational and marketing outlet to inform the Quebec population, including consumers, on the overall value of locally sourced wool in Canadian-produced fashion products. The cooperative will include those knowledgeable in wool production, processing, design, manufacturing, and marketing.

Method

Our proposed method for this research project is an exploratory Case Study. A Case Study approach is appropriate since we will be looking to obtain different sources of information -

interviews, observations, and documentation. Yin (2014) recommends Case Studies when there could be multiple sources of information.

We plan to meet at least 2 people at each level of the supply chain, including farmers, those involved in wool processing, manufacturers, and retailers. We expect to interview approximately 20 to 30 people. At this point, we have already received confirmation from people that accepted to participate in this project. We will also rely on documentation and observations for additional information.

Results

Our interviews with the various actors along the supply chain will provide us with a map of the different processes of the wool industry supply chain, along with a list of value stream KPIs, at each stage of the process. More precisely, this local supply chain mapping will describe each of the supply chain processes (with our interviews, observations, or documentation). We will then look for KPIs to measure profitability and durability such as the following: cost of raw material, cost of labor, life span of the material, cost per wear, process complexity (measured in time), fabric life span, and fabric failure.

Contribution and implications

We believe that the only way that wool could be a profitable and a cost-effective source of material for Canadian producers and consumers is to study the processes along a potential local supply chain with a collective perspective. In other words, each stakeholder, from the farmer to the consumer needs to cooperate so that the sum of parts outweighs the individual interests of each stakeholder. A Quebec cooperative could work with this Canadian coop to look for innovative ways to transform wool in Canada, instead of selling the raw wool (non-value-added) overseas. The knowledge gained from this case study could be transferred to other countries and industries that are looking to establish a local cooperative approach to promote local, sustainable production.

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282 pages.

Using discrete choice experiments to analyze member participation patterns in multi-stakeholder agri-food cooperatives

Presented by: Friedel, Stefanie

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Background

Member participation is an important issue at the very core of cooperatives, as they are value-driven, member-led organizations pursuing both economic and social goals benefiting their members and/or the wider community (Novkovic, 2021; Schneiberg, 2021). Member participation is defined in this study as different forms of active engagement in the informal and formal decision-making processes of the enterprise (e.g., attending social activities, annual meetings, delivering voluntary work or services, or commitment to working groups or the board of directors).

The 'extreme case' of multi-stakeholder cooperatives (MSCs, see Leviten-Reid & Fairbairn, 2011) was found particularly interesting as a research setting. In MSCs, a greater common goal is pursued by at least two different types of members (usually producers, suppliers, consumers, workers and/or sympathizers/supporters). In Belgium, like elsewhere in the world, MSCs in general have been emerging increasingly in the aftermath of global challenges such as the financial crisis of 2008/2009 (De Moor, 2021) and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Aims

The impact of member participation in cooperatives in general is increasingly acknowledged and studied (e.g. Cechin et al., 2013; Liang et al., 2015; Simmons, 2015), albeit with theoretical varieties as well as certain methodological inconsistencies. Therefore, the aim of this paper is twofold: First, it aims to provide a theory-based synthesis of different patterns of member participation, which structures the existent, somewhat scattered cooperative literature (Birchall and Simmons 2004a; 2004b) and combines it with general theories on (employee or volunteer) motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2010; Omoto & Snyder, 1995), organizational commitment (Fulton & Giannakas, 2001; Meyer & Allen, 1991), and (citizen) participation (Arnstein, 1969).

Second, this paper aims to provide empirical evidence on the underlying drivers of members to join a cooperative and actively participate in its daily or strategic decision-making, in comparison to various organizational characteristics and provisions.

Methods

Seeing the explorative character of the still-emerging research setting, we first conducted a thorough qualitative pre-study (consisting of 32 interviews with farmer- and consumer-members) to complement the existing literature with empirical evidence of members' motivations to join and

participate in agri-food MSCs in Belgium. Then, an online survey was developed and sent out to the entire population (N = 52) of agri-food MSCs in all three regions of Belgium.

First, the individual motivations of members to participate are studied through value-based factors at the micro level, whereby 'classes' of members are formed based on socio-economic characteristics such as type (farmer vs. consumer), gender, age, place of residence, education, income situation and care responsibilities (e.g. for children, disabled or elderly family members). Second, meso-level organizational characteristics are collected, i.e. geographical location, main activity (community supported agriculture farm vs. cooperative grocery store), age, size, dominance of a member subgroup in the board, member benefits provided, active participation opportunities provided). Thirdly, individual preferences of members were collected for a set of 'alternatives' consisting of participation patterns, motivations and organizational features through the introduction of discrete choice experiments along with the survey. The nested character of the collected data is acknowledged by adopting a cross-nested logit model (Bierlaire, 2006) in order to capture the social reality that different alternatives are possibly correlated, and therefore not independent but belonging to several nests (e.g. engaging in social activities organized by the cooperative and serving as a board member; or engaging in several agri-food MSCs).

Preliminary results and discussion

Preliminary results show how different classes of members show preferences for different patterns of participation. Several sets of analyses are carried out according to individual characteristics and organizational features, in order to identify possible correlations for board membership as compared to less intensive participation possibilities such as attendance of annual general meetings, working groups or social activities.

Additionally, congruence between individual values and organizational (shared) values is tested to create a deeper understanding of what drivers different types of members to participate in different ways in their cooperatives.

Contributions and implications

This study synthesizes theories of employee motivation, organizational commitment and volunteerism to improve understanding of the drivers of pro-social action in general, by focusing on the 'extreme case' of multi-stakeholder cooperatives. Contrary to traditional producer cooperatives or consumer cooperatives that both exist foremost to achieve benefits for their respective member category, MSCs in the agri-food sector are inherently striving towards more general community wellbeing and transformation attempts towards more sustainable food systems.

For organizational practice, several recommendations to improve members' participation in MSCs in particular can be drawn based on the results of this study. Furthermore, our analyses touch upon macro level implications such as policy frameworks and cultural differences, as apparent in the different parts of Belgium under study. Lastly, several avenues for further research are developed to verify the transferability of the results of this 'extreme case' setting for more traditional producer or consumer cooperatives in the agri-food sector, as well as cooperatives active in other industries.

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The relationship of firm ownership structure and sustainability in agri-food chains: A systematic literature review.

Presented by: Gega, Megi

Authors: Gega, Megi; Höhler, Julia; Bijman, Jos; Oude Lansink, Alfons

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Background: To meet increasing food demands in a sustainable manner, while facing challenges like overexploitation of resources, climate change, poverty, and hunger, sustainable food production is needed (Saitone and Sexton, 2017). Firms differ not only on sustainability initiatives but also on their sustainability performance. One explanation for this divergence might be the firm's ownership structure. Different ownership categories have distinct organizational and sustainability-related objectives, time horizons, risk assessment, and mitigation criteria (Bushee, 2004). As ownership structure has implications for firm goals, ambitions, strategy, and capital structure, differences ultimately result in differing sustainability performance (Sirsly and Sur, 2013). The existing literature shows contradictory findings without a clear direction of the relationship. Differences in the conceptualization and measurement of ownership and sustainability could be one explanation for the ambiguity in empirical results.

Aims: Previous literature reviews on the topic centered mostly around one form of ownership structure, one pillar of sustainability, and were not focused on the agrifood setting. Besides, theoretical underpinnings have not received much attention. To address these issues, this paper aims to provide a systematic qualitative synthesis of the main theories utilized and empirical evidence on how the differences between firm ownership structures (cooperatives, IOFs and family firms) provide explanations for differing sustainability in agri-food chains. This paper focuses on the relation of ownership structure and sustainability performance of agribusiness firms, but also considers the farm-level performance. The agri-food sector is the subject of this study because of its considerable economic impact as the world's largest employer and its vital contribution to social and environmental sustainability.

Methods: This paper employs a systematic literature review methodology following the PRISMA guidelines. The final sample consisted of 81 peer-reviewed journal publications and book chapters published from the year 1990, up to April 2022, in Scopus. The quality assessment focused on the authors' arguments, the presence of justification, theoretical framework building, and application. Two appraisal checklists were compiled (for theoretical and empirical publications), based on existing sets of measures for interpretability, transparency, coherence, theoretical frameworks, fitness to purpose or context, and general assessment of the applied methodology. A combination of narrative and thematic synthesis methods using the ATLAS.ti 22.0.5 software was adopted.

Results and discussion: Most publications focus on one type of ownership structure, while a small number provide a comparison of IOFs and cooperatives. Family ownership and the comparison of diverse ownership structures are understudied topics. There is a diverse pool of sustainability

conceptualizations and even more diverse operationalizations which makes the comparison between studies and achieving overall conclusions difficult. Additionally, there is a lack of studies considering the environmental and social dimensions or assessing the three sustainability pillars in conjunction. Most of the publications do not utilize theoretical models or arguments to explain the relationship but rather rely on the findings of previous studies to support their hypothesis.

Explanatory factors for the sustainability results are the capital structure, goals, and the governance system of the firm, which drive the last factor, the business strategy. Cooperatives seem to outperform other ownership structures, mostly on the environmental and social sustainability pillars, in terms of increase in welfare, driving sustainable supplier and farming practices, and sustainable technologies adoption. Meanwhile, IOFs seem to perform better in economic sustainability, in communicating sustainability performance and plans to their shareholders, especially on topics of direct interest to them (like emissions, animal welfare, and ethics). Family firms can outperform the other structures on financial viability due to their long-term horizon and governance system alignment. However, family firms underperform in most of the other conceptualizations, especially innovation and investment-intensive opportunities due to their risk aversion.

Contributions and implications: The results of this paper provide important insights for future studies. Future studies should consider a more detailed analysis of environmental and social sustainability, the inclusion of all three pillars of sustainability, and a more comprehensive comparison between the ownership structures. As existing studies already provide plenty of ideas on operationalization, replicating existing studies with other ownership structures could be interesting topics for future research. Theory-building papers and creative combinations of existing theories can be another future avenue. Another hypothesis that can be picked up by future research is that the one ownership structure outperforming the others in some sustainability indicators can be explained by their goals which drive attention to different parts of the value chain. For instance, cooperative goals and their characteristic of being owned and controlled by farmers, might drive cooperatives focus more on the upstream part of the value chain. Meanwhile, the goals and business strategy of IOFs seem to focus on the downstream part of the value chain. This focus, together with their capital advantage, might be drivers for IOFs to focus on producing more sustainable and innovative products. Moreover, studies which compare the effect of different ownership structures on sustainability performance downstream of the value chain with that upstream of the chain will be very valuable. The findings of such studies can be beneficial in guiding firm practices and aid policymakers in choosing targeted, effective incentives and regulations.

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The emergence of renewable energy cooperatives: effects of social capital in Dutch municipalities

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Background

In studying technological development, geography of innovation often attributes a central role to firms (Carlino & Kerr, 2015). However, addressing the grand societal challenges of today involves not only technological innovation by firms but also large-scale adoption of sustainable technologies by users (Truffer & Coenen, 2012). Especially in the process of local market formation for sustainable technologies, technology users can play a pivotal role (Grabher, et al., 2008). Nevertheless, the role of users has only received scant attention in the study of spatial differences in technological development (Boons & McMeekin, 2019).

Aim

As a prominent example of user involvement in local market formation, we analyze the spatial patterns of the founding of renewable energy (RE) cooperatives in the Netherlands on the municipal level. Specifically, we study the importance of social capital in explaining their founding. Indeed, social innovations, such as RE cooperatives, are argued to often co-occur with increased local social cohesion (Evers & Ewert, 2015). We argue that greater social capital within local communities increases the likeliness of RE cooperatives being founded. We specifically look at three types of network indicators of social capital (i.e. network closure, bridging and bonding).

Methods

The sample for this study is taken from 'Lokale Energie Monitor', a yearly updated database on RE cooperatives present in the Netherlands. From this database, data could be obtained on 623 Dutch RE cooperatives that were registered between 1986 and 2020 and were operational during the time of data collection. Negative binomial regression was used to model the differences in the number of RE cooperatives between municipalities. In order to capture social capital we use an existing database constructed by Corten (2012) and later refined by Norbutas and Corten (2018). This database is based on data coming from Hyves.nl, a Dutch online social network service that allows users to create an online profile and befriending other members, similar to Facebook. The dependent variable that was used is the number of RECs found in Dutch municipalities. As independent variables, we take the four measures of networked social capital as provided by Nortubas & Corten (2018). Negative binomial regression was used to model the differences in the number of RE cooperatives between municipalities.

Results and discussion

In studying three types of network structures, we found that especially network closure on the municipal level is important for the presence of RE cooperatives. We also find partial evidence for this importance of bonding social capital. We do not find effects for bridging social capital, meaning that our analysis mostly points to the importance of social relationships within municipalities, rather than relationships across different municipalities.

Previous studies on the role of social capital in regional development have shown that bonding social capital can hamper regional economic growth, because it is harmful for a communities' potential to adopt new ideas or combine different forms of knowledge (Beugelsdijk & Smulders, 2004; Knudsen, et al., 2007; Norbutas & Corten, 2018). Most of these studies mostly focus on more conventional ideas of entrepreneurship that could lead to new industry creation at the local level. However, the entrepreneurial activity needed for the founding of RE cooperatives is often regarded as a form of 'collective entrepreneurship' (Bauwens, et al., 2022) and as such, the innovation in this case is not so much found in their technological knowledge, but much more in their institutional configuration of existing technologies with their social environment. New entrepreneurial activities that might lead to regional diversification benefit from more localized social capital, in the forms of dense social networks or subcommunities, when these activities are rooted in communal interests.

Contributions and implications

This paper contributes to the study of regional development in three different ways. First, we explore how the founding of RE cooperatives is affected by structural and network social capital, which is a dimension of social capital underlying many of the indicators of social capital explored in previous research. Second, by looking at cooperatives as drivers of change, we go beyond the firm-focus often encountered in geography of innovation (Grabher, et al., 2008). Finally, in exploring local factors fostering the emergence of RE cooperatives, we focus on a more localized municipal level compared to previous studies, which seems to better correspond to the local embeddedness often ascribed to these cooperatives.

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Governing cooperative innovations: empirical studies across diverse cooperative sectors

Presented by: Giagnocavo, Cynthia

Authors: Giagnocavo, Cynthia (1); Kurimoto, Akira (2); Iliopoulos, Constantine (3); Puusa, Anu (4); Vieta, Marcelo (5); Novkovic, Sonja (6)

Organisations: 1: University of Almería, Spain; 2: Japan Co-operative Alliance; 3: Agricultural University of Athens; 4: East Finland University; 5: University of Toronto; 6: Saint Mary's University

Motivation for the session

CCR has held the consultation on the Co-operative Identity in and after the ICA Seoul Congress in 2021. The selected papers presented there are to be published soon in the Review of International Co-operation. Some panel sessions featuring this theme were organized in regional research conferences in 2022; Athens (Europe) and Curitiba (South America) in July, Bandung (Asia Pacific) in December.

Therefore, CCR decided to organize a panel session, this time focusing on governance of cooperative innovation, governance being an important component of cooperative identity, to contribute to the overall consultations on the co-operative identity at the ICA Global/European Research Conference to be in July, 2023.

Content of the session

The session, following the main theme of the conference 'Innovating in cooperative governance. Governing cooperative innovation', is composed of five presentations based on the empirical studies. Member centrality in co-operative governance is also a strong trigger for both social and technological innovations. As they strive to answer the shared needs of their members, co-operatives must often adapt their activities to the market while remaining relevant to the co-operative identity. They also strive to find innovative ways to stimulate members' use of the co-operative and increase value creation.

For the traditional sectors such as agricultural, consumer, and financial co-operatives, the technological innovations are necessary to stay in the increasingly competitive market, while the social innovations are introduced in many cases. For the emerging sectors such as healthcare/social and worker co-operatives, social innovations are widely practiced to meet unmet needs of citizens and workers while the technological innovations are also required to stay in the regulated market. In both cases, it is indispensable to govern and manage these innovations while adhering to the co-operative identity. The presentations showcase the best practices of successful governing of innovations in cooperatives.

Proposed format

After the introduction, 5 speakers will present PPT slides and discussion follows (90 min).

Introduction by Chair (5 min.)

Case of agricultural co-ops (12 min.)

Case of consumer co-ops (12 min.)

Case of health/social co-ops (12 min.)

Case of worker co-ops (12 min.)

Case of financial co-ops (12 min.)

Discussion (25 min.)

Governing cooperative innovations: empirical studies across diverse cooperative sectors

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Organisations: 1: University of Almeria, CCR & CIAG, Spain; 2: Agricultural Economics Research Institute, CCR, Greece; 3: East Finland University, CIAG, Finland; 4: Japan Co-operative Alliance, CCR & CIAG, Japan; 5: University of Toronto, CCR, Canada; 6: Saint Mary's Un

Participants

Cynthia Giagnocavo (chair), Almeria University, CCR & CIAG

Constantine Iliopoulos, Agricultural University of Athens, CCR

Anu Puusa, East Finland University, CIAG

Akira Kurimoto, Japan Co-operative Alliance, CCR & CIAG

Marcelo Vieta, University of Toronto, CCR

Sonja Novkovic, Saint Mary's University, CCR & CIAG

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For the traditional sectors such as agricultural, consumer and financial co-operatives, the technological innovations are necessary to stay in the increasingly competitive market while the

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Case of consumer co-ops (12 min.)

Case of health/social co-ops (12 min.)

Case of worker co-ops (12 min.)

Case of financial co-ops (12 min.)

Discussion (25 min.)

Tuzamurane Cooperative and Social economic development of Kirehe district, Rwanda.

Presented by: Gisaro, Ya-BITITI

Authors: Gisaro, Ya-BITITI (1); Mumararungu, Innocent (2); Ishimwe, Fabrice (3); Burny, Philippe (4)

Organisations: 1: University of Rwanda, Rwanda; 2: University of Liege; 3: University of Rwanda; 4: University of Liege

The aim of this study was to find out whether there is a significant relationship between Tuzamurane and the economic development of Kirehe district in the Eastern Province of Rwanda. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data from 68 purposively selected members of the cooperative, using descriptive statistics and correlation for analysis. Findings indicate that the cooperative has promoted business growth, employment creation, mortgage loans and other different form of interest charges on loans where the majority 60.3% agreed that economic development is due to collateral security while 92.6% business growth, employment creation have increased. 75% of respondents strongly agreed that they started their business with more than half of their capital coming from the loan. 85.3% said they had started their own business such as farming, shopping and livestock, 91.2% said their income had increased. Tuzamurane has positively contributed to the economic development of its beneficiaries 85.3% of respondents strongly agreed that they started their own business like agriculture, shopping and livestock, 91.2% increased their sales volume, while 80.9% have improved production process in business, 91.2% got better services to their customers and 63.2% often look for new ideas outside. There is a significant strong and positive correlation between the credit offered by the cooperative and economic development with a correlation coefficient ($r=0.741$, $P=0.039<0.05$).

Consumers Circle at Cooperativa Obrera. An innovative experience in a large consumer cooperative.

Presented by: Glas, Mariano

Authors: Glas, Mariano

Organisations: Universidad Nacional del Sur, Argentine Republic

According to the International Cooperative Alliance in the Statement on the Cooperative Identity (ICA, 1995) "A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise".

Initially the people that lead the cooperative is the same that created it. They know the cooperative history because they built it. But what happens after many years or when the cooperative grow considerably?

Members are key stakeholders in the model of governance (Novkovic, 2014) and it's necessary for cooperatives to find a way to stay close to them and engage them as much as possible. At the beginning or in small cooperatives is relatively easy, but what the leaders should do to achieve it in large cooperatives?

How is possible to keep alive the pioneers' spirit and will, and at the same time modernizing to satisfy today's member needs respecting the Values and Principles of cooperative movement?

Cooperativism is an economic, social, and cultural phenomenon that usually exceeds pioneers' initial idea. Today cooperative members represent at least 12% of humanity (ICA, 2023) and top 300 biggest cooperatives in the world turnover are 2,171 billion USD (WCM, 2022).

Professor's Birchall research (2017) gave a deeply understand of governance's situation in some large cooperatives. In the conclusion he made a proposal for researchers "to do some case studies of cooperatives that demonstrate 'best practice' in governance design and redesign, so we can all learn from them".

This research is partly an answer to Professor Birchall call, analyzing what is Consumers Circle at Cooperativa Obrera, the largest Argentinian consumer cooperative.

Stablished in 1920 by 173 workers in Bahia Blanca to made bread at an affordable price, today has more than 2.4 million members, operates 145 stores in 6 provinces, 2 ecommerce sites and generate 6400 jobs. Even with no stores in big cities such as Buenos Aires, Cordoba, Mendoza and Rosario were lives more than 40% of Argentinian population, and a lot of stores in small cities with less than 20.000 people, by the end of 2022 had 4.5% of national market share, including places with more than 70% of share like Bahia Blanca.

How you ensure governance in a centenary coop, when it open new stores thousands of kilometers away from where it born and where it has headquarters? Is only by the fulfillment of national cooperative law or doing every year a Cooperative Social Audit, even it is certified by International Cooperative Alliance or need something else?

In the case of Cooperativa Obrera the answer is clear, so it does something else that is not mandatory by law but has demonstrated over years that is necessary and contribute to ensure cooperative's governance.

That's the Consumers Circle.

Created in 1996 when concept of "governance" even didn't exist as we know today in Argentina, it was an innovative idea inspired in Japanese Quality Circle of continuous improvement and in some experiences from Coop Italy.

The original aim was to be in touch with consumers to listening and learn from them in a completely new scenario when for first time in its existence faced the competition from international retailers that arrived at Bahia Blanca in a neoliberal economic context which was developing in Argentina with structural reforms that were pro international companies instead of local business and in favor of profit organizations instead of nonprofit like cooperatives.

Initial goal evolved year after year and today the Consumers Circle exceeded by far its original purpose and become a tool to strengthen the cooperative identity and get the engagement of many members that later take actively participation at local district assemblies to choose delegates to General Assembly in which Members of the Board are elected and the Balance and Income Statements of fiscal year are approved, according to Argentinian's cooperative law for cooperatives of more than 5000 members.

The research used primary data sources: magazine Familia Cooperativa (a magazine delivered to members for free since 1974); Board Acts; interviews with past and present members of the Board and former and actual General Manager and information of Cooperative Social Audit since its first edition.

With data collected and empirical observation it has been identified milestones in its life and how it evolved over years, how it was thought and how it works today and its key issues of success.

The activities of Consumers Circle contributing to keep alive the ideas of the pioneers while Cooperativa Obrera serve to its members according to the needs of the 21st century, respecting the Values and Principles by an adequate cooperative governance.

Finally, the research proposes a theoretical model that can be apply in large cooperatives (consumer, insurance, banks, public services, etc.), including recommendations on how to develop the strategy, how to starts and turn it operative, the way to measure its results and key issues to be considered by the Board and top managers.

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Empathy, amniotic fluid of cooperation?

Presented by: GOUIL, Hervé

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Omar Zanna; Doctor in Sociology and doctor in Psychology, University Professor, Le Mans University.

Title

Empathy, amniotic fluid of cooperation?

Summary :

Cooperation is ethically preferable, strategically optimal, but psychologically difficult... From the outset, this assertion is controversial. We argue it is a necessary controversy which should be clarified without delay. If we agree that cooperation is ethically preferable (with the philosopher Alain) [1], strategically optimal, (with Axelrod)[2], and even, as evoked today in political speeches, (Antonio Guterres 2022),[3] that the survival of the human species is directly dependent on our ability to cooperate, then why does it seem so difficult to escape obviously « non-cooperative » behaviour in our relationships, in our workplace, in all trade and in our educational institutions, ? »

To explore this question, we draw inspiration from recent work, particularly in behavioural economics, with one of its most famous representatives, Daniel Kahneman[4], but also from cognitive science, neuroscience, psychology, sociology and evolutionary biology. These fields bring new insights into the foundations of human abilities for cooperation, as illustrated by the work of Stéphane Debove on the sense of equity in humans [5]. Our sense of fairness can stem from an algorithm that allows us to calculate the opportunity costs of other individuals, and adjust our behavior, in order to be chosen as a partner most often. This sense of fairness, at the base of the skills for cooperation, is in no way an "option", but constitutes a fundamental skill and an essential condition for the resilience of any human group.

If we all have this cooperative "software" within us, the challenge is therefore not to create it, but to save it, to update it and to seek to understand what prevents us from using it fully, to grasp the nature of the "bugs" and inhibitions that block its implementation. It is therefore less a question of learning or striving to cooperate than succeeding in lifting the brakes, overcoming inhibitions or identifying the origins of "anti-cooperative" dynamics.

To explore this avenue, we can first broaden the definition of cooperation from plain language "acting with a common goal and in a non-conflicting way" to that used by biologists describing "any behaviour beneficial to others" (Debove, 2021)[6]. Starting from this insight, we hypothesise that it is therefore not competition, but violence that is the opposite of cooperation and that violence towards

others would be the consequence of momentary paralysis of empathy [7]. A behaviour that is detrimental to the other (the opposite of cooperation) could stem from a disturbance of the sense of fairness generated by an eclipse of our capacity for empathy. Deploying our potential for cooperation, in inter-individual relationships, in the workplace, in educational organizations, as well as between collectives, would therefore benefit from a better understanding of what hinders “cooperative know-how”, and thus from forms of training adapted to strengthen this social skill (Algan & Huillery 2022)[8].

To do this, our paper will be an opportunity to open a dialogue on the obstacles to cooperation and the levers to overcome them, by posing the hypothesis of empathy, playing a significant role in cooperative processes. More specifically, we want to show that empathy acts directly, in the present, face-to-face or side-by-side to perceive how one’s action may be beneficial or detrimental to a “partner”. It can thus confirm or invalidate my “intuition” and validate the confidence that I can place in the perception of what is right for him and in his own perception of my interest. By the sensitive perception of what is going to be good or not for the other, in his commitment with me in action, empathy would thus correspond to an emotional attunement necessary for the reciprocal expression of the sense of fairness, a sensitive adjustment of the cooperation between two people. Thus bathed in the amniotic fluid of empathy, cooperation can take shape.

Keywords : Cooperation, Empathy, Work, Education, Violence.

Thème 9 : Cooperative education and training

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Enabling liberation through innovation: the potential of co-operatives and co-operative principles for disabled people in Britain and beyond

Presented by: Graby, Steve

Authors: Graby, Steve

Organisations: University of Leeds, United Kingdom

Disabled people make up one of the most numerically significant, and arguably most systematically excluded, minority groups in much of the contemporary world (Berghs et al 2019). In Britain, as in other countries, disabled people have self-organised since at least the early 1970s in membership organisations to struggle for their liberation from social and economic exclusion, and within those organisations have developed concepts and principles such as the social model of disability and independent living (Barnes 2013; Beckett & Campbell 2015; Tarrant 2022).

While many disabled people are members of co-operatives, and some co-operatives exist that specialise in services used by disabled people (e.g. consumer or multi-stakeholder social care co-ops) or in providing employment for disabled people (e.g. workers' co-ops formed from former 'sheltered' workplaces), there has been little empirical or theoretical work done on disabled people's involvement in co-operatives or on the potential significance of co-operatives as tools with which disabled people may overcome social and economic marginalisation.

Some authors have pointed to synergies and similarities between the principles and practices of co-operatives and those of disabled people's movements and organisations (e.g. Beresford 2016; Roulstone & Hwang 2015), but in Britain - unlike for example in the Nordic countries, where co-operatives are a relatively mainstream part of the landscape of personal assistance provision for disabled people (Askheim et al 2014; Westberg 2010) - there has been little organised contact or collaboration between the two.

This paper is based on research on disabled people's involvement in co-operatives of all kinds in the UK (see <https://disabledcoops.uk>), done with the aim not only of investigating disabled people's experiences within co-ops and the similarities and potential interconnections between the aims, values and practices of the disabled people's and co-operative movements, but also of establishing active dialogue between the disabled people's and co-operative movements in order to develop innovative co-operative solutions to disabling barriers.

This was a mixed methods project, also involving a survey of co-ops covering the extent to which they were aware of disabled members' access needs and case studies of 3 specific co-ops in disability-related fields, but the data presented here is largely drawn from the primary research method used, semi-structured interviews with disabled members of co-operatives across the UK, primarily housing and workers' co-ops.

Participants perceived both considerable synergies and possible tensions between the principles and practices of co-ops and those of disabled people's activism. Key areas of connection include values of equity and inclusivity, subsidiarity or control by the directly affected ("nothing about us without us"), non-paternalistic solidarity, collective autonomy and interdependence, and the intention to change environments to fit people rather than vice versa. Identifying and examining these, while acknowledging problematic aspects of participants' experiences such as unexamined barriers and ableist ideologies within co-ops, points towards the value both of the co-operative business form as a strategic tool for disabled people, and of constructive dialogue about shared ideas and principles for both the disabled people's and co-operative movements.

This suggests that co-operatives have significant potential for challenging and surmounting barriers experienced by disabled people in many aspects of daily life, and for meeting many access and assistance needs that are currently not met by the state or market sectors. Co-operatives may also be more economically sustainable than the types of organisations that have typically been founded by disabled people in Britain, and therefore may be particularly significant for disabled people's survival in a time of multiple crises (austerity politics and economics, Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the prospect of catastrophic climate change), in all of which disabled people have been among the most severely and acutely affected (King & Gregg 2022; McRuer 2018; Shakespeare et al 2021), especially given the proven ability of co-ops to withstand such crises more successfully than non-co-operative businesses (Billiet et al 2021; Birchall & Ketilson 2009). However, co-ops should not be regarded as a panacea, but as one tool among many potentially available in the struggle for disabled people's liberation.

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Value of active governance in rental housing co-operatives

Presented by: Grimstad, Sidsel

Authors: Grimstad, Sidsel (1); Louise, Crabtree-Hayes (2); Neil, Perry (2); Emma, Power (2); Liz, Ayres (2); Wendy, Stone (3); Piret, Veeroja (3); Nestor, Zapata (3)

Organisations: 1: Griffith University, Australia; 2: Western Sydney University; 3: Swinburne University

Housing affordability is an increasing problem in Australia, for both low and increasingly middle-income households increasing inequality in society (Burke et al., 2020). The Australian settler colonial context, dispossession of First Nations people (Blatman-Thomas & Porter 2019), and with a high level of immigration, past housing policy and practice has given priority to the financial values of housing as a safety net of accumulated wealth (Troy, 2012). This has resulted in a duopoly with two archetypal housing models; a) private ownership, in which the resident is a financialised investor with property rights, or b) private rental, where the resident household has (limited) rights of occupation. A third and declining public housing option is highly residualised, persistently underfunded, and as a result, heavily over-subscribed while prone to being poorly maintained (Crabtree, 2018).

The last decade the Australian State governments have outsourced social housing development and management to a private non-profit sector of community housing. In four states (NSW, VIC, WA, SA) community housing providers (CHPs) act as peak bodies for rental co-operatives that have existed (invisibly) for decades. These co-ops were initially self-organised and established for low- to moderate-income residents, and often had a special purpose (support for single parents) or established for a specific groups (cultural background, profession, older people etc). There is renewed interest by governments to find affordable housing solutions, and in rental housing co-operatives as a potential self-managed housing solution instead of social housing that is managed by a community housing provider (Apps, 2021, BCCM 2016, Commonwealth of Australia 2016). There have been some new housing co-operative developments, however due to the unfamiliarity of the co-operative model, and legal barriers, funding for new housing co-operatives is difficult. Member-based organisations that are in charge of governance and management of housing co-operatives challenge the archetypal narratives outlined above and provide a lens for re-examining housing values.

The ARC Linkage Research project (2020-2023) is examining how a rental housing co-operative model may provide added social, governance and employment value to the co-op members and as compared to other models of social housing. It further explores the extent of understanding of the co-operative principles among the Community Housing Provider and the member/tenants. The 3 year research project has collected data through member surveys, time-use studies, surveys of the Community Housing Provider and Interviews, it is in the last phase of data analysis and will launch multiple papers in 2023 of which this presentation will draw from.

This paper emerges from a new Australian Research Council funded project, "Articulating value in housing co-operatives", that seeks to identify the values, benefits, and challenges of member-run housing co-operatives and the patterns of these across different types of affordable rental housing

co-operatives in Australia. These include both co-operative member benefits and societal/community values. It also explores whether or how the co-operative principles guide management and governance of rental co-operatives in Australia and addresses how these may enable more equitable rental housing systems (Crabtree et al 2019).

Keywords: (max. 5)

Housing co-operatives, co-operative values, co-operative identity, social values, affordable housing

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Green Coops: drivers of innovation for circular strategies by Italian cooperatives

Presented by: Guerreschi, Asia

Authors: Guerreschi, Asia; Zecca, Emy

Organisations: University of Ferrara, Italy

Based on values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, and equality (ICA) the co-operative's identity and structure makes them a unique type of enterprise that requires to be studied, since they are also responsible among other firms to be sustainable. Co-operatives' social and economic contribution requires a study of their impact and role to reach specifically environmental sustainability, particularly, in implementing circular strategies (CES) and eco innovation (EI). An initial literature review analysis identifies that co-operatives facilitate the implementation of some circular economy (CE) processes and cooperation in general is an EI driver. In this paper, we identify innovation barriers and drivers of such implementation among co-operatives by analyzing the questionnaire results, through an econometric model, from over 250 social Italian co-operatives representing multiple regions and industries. While identifying the limitations of this analysis, the results highlight that cooperation and specific managerial elements, such as age and investments in R&D, resulted drivers to the implementation of EI and CES among co-operatives. In particular being part of a production chain, resulted as a significant driver for all forms of innovation analyzed. While innovation drivers and barriers have been researched already, the absence on research on co-operatives specifically makes this paper strongly relevant. It has led to the creation of a research group Climate Circular Coop with the aim to investigate the presence and creation of "green co-op" in a paradigm shift now required by every stakeholder if we wish to successfully achieve sustainable development.

Circular Economy & Co-operatives: Climate Circular Coop

Presented by: Guerreschi, Asia

Authors: Guerreschi, Asia

Organisations: University of Ferrara, Italy

Cooperatives play an important role towards a just society. Born to tackle the struggles and failures of governments, markets, and industries, (Codini, 2007) cooperatives' objective is meant to close the gap on untackled spaces that derive in society from economic, social, and cultural differences (James, 1987). Therefore, as the interest in environmental sustainability increases, there is a wonder on the role that co-operatives play to not only reduce the negative impact, but however, but also contribute to the just transition, as expressed by the European Union's Circular Action Plan (2015, 2020) highlights that changes will be needed for manufacturing industries and how we think about production and consumption.

Already in the past, the cooperative firms addressed various forms of sustainability. Therefore, their ability to innovate and contribute to the ecological transition deserves to be investigated. Thus, this session looks to raise the questions on "green co-ops" and their ability to innovate in a new economy where firm values and market pressures are not only aligned. In particular, we question what this means in regards to potentially new forms of cooperativism.

In particular, the session invites new academics and welcomes colleagues already busy in our existing research project 'Climate Circular Coop' for a roundtable discussion on the impact of cooperatives to achieve efficient and sufficient circularity. The project coordinated by the University of Ferrara wants to expand the network of researchers and cooperatives involved in social and environmental innovation studying barriers and drivers to sustainable development and efficient application of circular economy strategies.

Proposed format: Hybrid / This could potentially turn into a workshop to collaborate on the development of this topic together with attending researchers.

Introduction by Massimiliano Mazzanti (University of Ferrara)

Introduction by Rafael Ziegler (HEC)

1. Eleonore Compère, Emmanuel Raufflet, Martine Vézina, Rafael Ziegler: "Circular economy and cooperatives in Quebec: experiences with business models and supporting policies"
2. Pietro Ghirlanda (University of Milan) "Platform cooperatives: towards social and environmental sustainability" In times of growing inequalities and climate crises, new terrains of conflicts and collective actions are emerging: one of these is the attempt to make the digital transition more just and reduce its negative impacts on society and the environment.
3. Ermanno Celeste Tortia (University of Trento) "Co-operative Enterprises and the Ecological Transition." Cooperative enterprises are known to be locally rooted organizations, often, though not

always, characterized by a high degree of stakeholder involvement. Moreover, in most countries, cooperatives are strongly characterized by the presence of collective rather than individual or private capital. This article attempts to shed new light on the potential role of cooperatives in the transition from a linear to a circular economy, based on their organizational peculiarities.

4. Asia Guerreschi, Emy Zecca (University of Ferrara) "Green Coops: drivers of innovation for circular strategies by Italian cooperatives" The current energy crisis has brought to light the economic and political risks associated with the current Western energy production and supply system. In particular, there is the dual need to guarantee, on the one hand, better environmental sustainability in the production and consumption of energy and, on the other, to ensure users accessible and less volatile energy prices.

5. Marco Lomuscio (University of Trento) "Resilience is in the air!" Evidence suggests that Italian worker takeovers while securing jobs and workers' earnings, empower communities and local authorities.

6. Marina Albanese (University of Naples Federico II) "Are worker cooperatives green?" In 2015 the United Nations (UN) proposed its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The agenda specified seventeen interlinked Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs (Connors, 2015). The SDGs balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental. Almost 200 countries subscribed to the SDGs, agreeing to work on this "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all." Since then, the terms sustainability and sustainable development have gained considerable attention on a global scale.

7. Stefan Geskus, Koen Frenken, Thomas Bauwens, Matthijs B. Punt, and Rense Corten: "The emergence of renewable energy cooperatives: effects of social capital in Dutch municipalities"

8. Andrea Cori (Area Studi Legacoop) Mattia Granata, Giorgio Nanni: "Green energy cooperatives: The Italian case" The current energy crisis has brought to light the economic and political risks associated with the current Western energy production and supply system. In particular, there is the dual need to guarantee, on the one hand, better environmental sustainability in the production and consumption of energy and, on the other, to ensure users accessible and less volatile energy prices.

9. Marco De Nigris (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan) "Social Cooperatives and Resources Management: Involving Civil Society in the Circular Economy

Transition" - Social Cooperatives are the meeting point between the world of cooperatives and the third sector. For decades, some of them have been directly involving civil society in integrating waste prevention and materials reuse with purposes of highly social content. Today, as an outcome of the recognized need for a growingly circular flow of resources, their previously consolidated role faces new opportunities and challenges that can be relevant in some key sectors and materials subject to the transition.

Cooperative Studies: Current and future research and lecturing on co-operatives in Europe

Presented by: Hanisch, Markus

Authors: Hanisch, Markus; Bijman, Jos

Organisations: HU Berlin, Germany

ICA-CCR Europe's Session proposal for the ICA Global and European CCR Conference, Leuven, 10-13 July 2023

Session Title:

Cooperative Studies: Current and future research and lecturing on co-operatives in Europe

Interactive session of the ICA-CCR Europe board

Conference Theme: Cooperative Research and Education

Session co-chairs:

- Markus Hanisch (Humboldt Universität zu Berlin)
- Jos Bijman (Wageningen University & Research)
- ICA-CCR board members

Abstract

Our world is changing beyond recognition. The challenge of ensuring that in the future people can live a dignified life, while doing so within the Planetary Boundaries has yet to be met. Supply chains and with them agri-food, labor, energy and housing markets are globalized while agency, democratic governance and social protection are not.

Co-operatives are important economic and civil society actors in relevant sectors. They may play their roles in the democratization of business and finance sectors; as important players in the economy and civil society they may initiate or support the acceptance of certain social and technical innovations and stimulate the sustainability transformation of agriculture, energy and food systems.

Research and lecturing on co-operatives has to meet challenges of ongoing transformations in business and society and needs to better combine old and new theories in explaining current development and providing answers for the sustainability challenges. Our session on the future of cooperative research and lecturing aims at bringing together junior and senior researchers with their ongoing and future research and lecturing activities from all around the world. The key questions to be discussed in this session are (1) how research and lecturing on cooperatives can best address key questions related to ongoing societal transition processes; and (2) how the ICA-CCR Europe board

can better support and facilitate research and lecturing activities of scholars in the area of cooperative studies.

One of the topics to be discussed is what we can learn from and how we can align with research and teaching on similar types of economic organization such as social enterprises and steward-owned businesses that also apply democratic governance and/or pursue societal missions.

The session will consist of several presentations on emerging and current research and lecturing themes and activities and a moderated general interactive discussion among session participants about ideas and concepts for closer collaboration in research and lecturing activities across Europe and the world. The session is open to contributions narrating research and lecturing experience fitting within its scope.

A: Emerging themes in research and teaching on cooperatives

Markus Hanisch and Jos Bijman

B: Cooperative Studies – an ICA-CCR Europe board perspective

ICA-CCR board members

C. Other contributions fitting the topic of the session

D. Open discussion: Activities and projects in support of Cooperative Studies

Forewords – The new challenge for cooperative law: to manage its double function

Presented by: Hiez, David

Authors: Hiez, David; Douvitsa, Ifigeneia; Villafañez Perez, Itziar; Apps, Ann; Bennison, Linda; Cusa, Emanuele; Alzola Berriozabalgoitia, Izaskun; García Müller, Alberto; De Iscar De Rojas, Paula; Soledad Fernández Sahagún, María

Organisations: International Journal of Cooperative Law (IJCL)

With the passage of time, the cooperatives are more and more numerous around the world and their international recognition is no more debated. Apart from its own organisation, cooperatives were officially acknowledged first in 2002 with the International Labour Organization (hereinafter « ILO ») recommendation (Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, June 2002 (N°193)) and more recently in 2012 by the United Nations and its International Year of Cooperatives. This doesn't mean that the cooperatives don't face some difficulties, that no political, social or economic power fight to impede its development, but these efforts, even when successful, may not profit from an official public support. The cooperatives are considered as a legitimate way to make business and, with the successive crisis the world faces, they appear more attractive.

The cooperative law benefits from a parallel increasing recognition. The number of cooperative legislations has increased since the decolonization but most of cooperative laws have also been amended, as an evidence of their evolution. It is not possible to assess the place of cooperative law in the various jurisdictions, and it is sure that some countries have for a long time paid a strong attention to cooperative law (Italy, Spain, Latin America), but in most countries cooperative law was not considered by lawyers out of some very narrow cooperative circles. The observation was far more visible at the international level, so that the evolution is easy to perceive. The number of cooperative lawyers or experts in cooperative law is growing, as well as the events dedicated to cooperative law. The creation of this International Journal of Cooperative Law in 2018 is the last evidence of the phenomenon. This is certainly the automatic consequence of the interest of international organizations for cooperative law and their support to the creation or modernization of national or regional legislations. But this explanation is not sufficient : generally speaking, the cooperatives, because of their development, are more intricate into the economic relations and require more structured elaboration of their functioning. The cooperatives are less marginal and can only survive in their relationships with capitalist enterprises or state by fixing their specificities in such a way to allow the courts to enforce it.

During last years, another phenomenon has appeared: the institutionalization of the political partnership of cooperatives with some other enterprises, into a notion which is named social and solidarity economy (CAIRE, TADJUDJE, « Vers une culture juridique mondiale de l'entreprise d'ESS ? Une approche comparative internationale des législations ESS », RECMA, 2019/3). This is clearly visible through the number of national legislations on social and solidarity economy, but it has been very recently extended to the international level : first in 2021 with the action plan of the European Commission (the Social Economy Action Plan « Building an economy that works for people : an action plan for the social economy”, December 2021), but also in 2022 with the official recommendation of

the OECD (OECD Recommendation on the Social and Solidarity Economy and Social Innovation, June 2022) and the resolution of the 110th International Conference of the ILO (Resolution concerning decent work and the social and solidarity economy, 2022 ; BOUCHARD, HIEZ, A Universal Definition For The Social And Solidarity Economy: A First Appraisal Of The International Labour Organization Resolution (August 15, 2022) ; UNRISD, Working Paper 2023-02, H. Jenkins, Historic Breakthrough for Social and Solidarity Economy at the International Labour Organization ; Reconnaissance internationale de l'économie sociale et solidaire : résolution de la 110e conférence internationale du travail – David Hiez – RTD com. 2022). And this is supported by the ICA, as it appears through its membership as funder in 2021 to the International Coalition of the Social Solidarity Economy. That new reality, somehow more conceptual than materially observable (but isn't law a concept in the end of the day?) is not effectless for the cooperatives and cooperative law. On the one hand, cooperative law is undoubtedly a major source of inspiration for the elaboration of the definition and principles of the social and solidarity economy (Perspectives on Cooperative Law, Festschrift In Honour of Professor Hagen Henry, Hiez, D.. Background and Contribution of Hagen Henry to the Development of Cooperative Law). On the other hand, the existing of a supra grouping of enterprises, in which cooperatives are only a part, constitute a strong interrogation for them. Europe is a very good example, since Cooperatives Europe, the European branch of ICA, decided to remain outside Social Economy Europe, the organization of social and solidarity economy enterprises. The problem is not absolutely new, but the question becomes more and more accurate with the recent acceleration of the development of the social and solidarity economy. The dilemma for cooperatives is to chose between the risk to be out of a new political arrangement about social and solidarity economy with which they share many common features, and the risk to lose its specific identity. Maybe the cooperative law is able to propose a solution to that tricky question.

Our hypothesis is that the cooperative law is likely to present two sides, related to two different functions: an operational aspect of cooperative law and a conceptual aspect of cooperative law.

The deepening of these two aspects is one of the major goals of this Journal. It is crucial to help the cooperatives in their daily life and this requires to improve the legal mechanisms that they use. But it is also our responsibility to take part into the current elaboration of an alternative model to capitalism. These two aspects must absolutely undertaken in parallel, precisely to avoid a separation between the two sides of the coin.

This distinction is itself didactic. Both sides are necessarily always present in the meantime ; if not the coin (cooperative law) would vanish. With a different intensity, all the articles combine these two dimensions. It must be clear that cooperatives will not make that new world alone, and cooperative lawyers should not run after a pure cooperativism but facilitate the growth of cooperative seeds in new fields. This is part of the new challenge.

‘Walking the talk’: governing sustainability reporting in Mondragon worker cooperatives

Presented by: Imaz, Oier

Authors: Imaz, Oier (1); Uriarte, Leire (1); Iñurrategi, Iñigo (2)

Organisations: 1: Mondragon University, Spain; 2: Mondragon Corporation, Spain

Background

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) require a transformative vision based on a ‘people-centered and planet-sensitive’ economy (UN 2015). This transformation entails addressing the root causes of development problems and dealing simultaneously with sustainable development’s economic, social, and environmental dimensions (Utting 2018). To that end, SDGs explicitly recognize the role of business together with governments and civil society (Buhmann, Jonsson, and Fisker 2019). However, realizing the sustainable development agenda depends on the action at the firm level (Raith and Siebold 2018).

Firms’ business models within the spectrum of the social and solidarity economy (SSE) and, in particular, of co-operative firms are well placed to contribute to the sustainable development agenda (Imaz and Eizagirre 2020). Indeed, co-operative enterprises are considered by their very nature “a sustainable and participatory form of business” (Wanyama 2016, 4). However, change within a co-operative organization generally follows an incremental rather than a transformative logic insofar as its governance is deeply embedded in the daily practice of its business organization; it evolves in different ways, but radical change seems risky (Birchall 2017).

Aim

In this paper, we present the results of a research project carried out between 2020 and 2022 on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the co-operatives of the MONDRAGON group. The primary motivation is to understand how the implementation of the sustainable development agenda is governed in worker co-operatives. On these bases, we intend to understand better how co-operatives encompass the transformative nature of change in the sustainable development agenda and the incremental nature of change within worker-cooperative firms.

Methods

First, we have analysed the non-financial information statement of 18 co-operatives of the MONDRAGON group. The Non-Financial Information and Diversity Law (11/2018) establishes a series of criteria by which companies must submit a Non-Financial Information Statement. Eighteen co-operatives of the Mondragon group had the obligation in 2019.

Second, ten in-depth interviews were carried out with heads of areas and departments involved in managing the sustainable development agenda in co-operatives of the group. The interviews were structured and lasted an average of 45 minutes. To develop the questionnaire and guide the subsequent analysis, we based ourselves on the Guide for good co-operative governance (Otalora, 2019).

Finally, a workshop was held with the participation of 2 international experts and 18 heads of areas or departments managing the implementation of the 2030 agenda in 16 co-operatives of the group to share the results of the in-depth interviews. Next, a working session was celebrated with 9 participants to curate a set of 12 recommendations.

Results and discussion

1. The main need that stimulates the debate on sustainable development is the obligation to respond to the requirements of regulatory entities and clients adequately.
2. Understand the transformations resulting from implementing the sustainable development agenda as a lever of change for co-operatives, not as a challenge.
3. Work on indicators that allow linking objectives (impact) and process (systems) (for example, SDG and ISO) to model the 2030 agenda in its application to co-operatives.
4. Develop batteries of indicators that allow quantifying (monetizing) social advances from the perspective of the business model of co-operatives (integral social value).
5. Signify the change of discourses and practices that the agenda for sustainable development entails from and for co-operatives; seek your own answers.
6. The involvement of the manager and the definition of a specific responsibility for sustainability in the board of directors.
7. The development of the agenda is transversal to the socio-business project of the co-operatives, which requires sustainable strategic plans and coordination structures.
8. Sustainable strategic plans need to specify what must be done and include a shared reflection on why and for what (the meaning) of sustainable cooperativism.
9. The role of the President of the Governing Council to anticipate and manage (through the social council) the opening of the debate to worker-members.
10. The internal communication of the sustainable development agenda, and its implementation in co-operatives, is as important as its external communication.
11. Establish alliances with other companies in the territory that, without being co-operatives, share a transforming vision of the sustainable development agenda.
12. Enable inter-cooperation instruments (regulations, sanctions...) between co-operatives of the group to promote the transformative capacity of the 2030 agenda.

Contributions and implications

The 12 recommendations are being used to develop a user-friendly guide to distribute among co-operatives of the group. With this guide, we aim to help co-operatives to reflect on their strategy to implement the sustainable development agenda. On the other hand, the recommendations contribute to a better understanding of worker-cooperatives' capacity to encompass the transformative nature of change in the sustainable development agenda and the incremental nature of change within worker-cooperatives.

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Enterprise, Cooperation and Public Policy: The Experience of the Industrial Common Ownership Movement (ICOM), 1971-2001

Presented by: Irving, Sean

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Organisations: University of Essex, United Kingdom

Enterprise, Cooperation and Public Policy: The Experience of the Industrial Common Ownership Movement (ICOM), 1971-2001

Aims

This paper takes a historical perspective and examines the emergence and decline of the UK's Industrial Common Ownership Movement (1971-2001). In doing so it aims to provide lessons for a new wave of interest and activism within the worker cooperative movement in the UK, as evidenced by the foundation of a new federation of worker coops in 2023.[i]

The purpose is to consider the following:

- How cooperation functions in the midst of a competitive market.
- How groups with a radical economic agenda can promote their causes using the language of entrepreneurship.
- To chart the changing relationship of a business lobby group to government.
- To provide a case study of how a business lobby groups can shape policy and thinking within government.
- To understand how the priorities of government impact, even distort, the aims of radical political economy.

Background

The worker cooperative movement in the UK has had a chequered history. While a core element of cooperative thought and practice since the Fenwick Weavers of the 1760's, it has often been overshadowed by the larger consumer's cooperative movement led by the Consumer Wholesale Society (CWS). The 1970s witnessed an upsurge in worker owner enterprises. At the heart of this was the support offered by ICOM and the funds provided by the associated Industrial Common Ownership Finance (ICOF) which was able to draw on government financial support in the initial phase.[ii]

ICOM was in many respects a dynamic and entrepreneurial body whose founders were dissatisfied with what they regarded as the conservatism of the existing cooperative movement, dominated by the CWS. They were also frustrated with the lack of emphasis placed on producer cooperation and the non-existence of a body to champion that cause.

The group had a number of objectives:

- The promotion of legislation to encourage cooperative ownership of worker enterprises.
- To serve as network for existing worker cooperatives.
- To cultivate better relationships between the producer cooperative movement and Trade Unions.
- To establish better working relationships with the existing cooperative movement.
- To provide support and examples of best practice to new and existing producer coops.
- To provide start-up capital to new coops via a loan system under the stewardship of the associated Industrial Common Ownership Fund (ICOF)
- To shape the approach of newly formed Cooperative Development Agencies (1978)

The group established strong links with the second Wilson and Callaghan Labour governments (1974-79) and with a number of Labour MPs such as Tony Benn and Bob Edwards.

There was also cross-party interest, with figures as diverse as Norman Tebitt and David Owen also having various degrees of involvement.

The paper argues that the ICOM experience provides a window onto two very different ways of thinking about common ownership/worker coops:

- a) A thorough-going economic transformation as a route to a form of decentralised socialism retaining markets.
- b) A way of encouraging entrepreneurial work force committed to profit maximisation for personal benefit within the competitive market economy.

In the 1970's ICOM positioned itself as the champion of producer coops in the UK and was largely responsible for the passing of the Common Ownership Act 1976. Via the Act it became the vehicle for distributing government financial assistance to new coops.

However, I argue that the expansive nature of the language around common ownership allowed the movement to be co-opted by Conservative governments over the 1980s via the Cooperative Development Agencies.

ICOM itself, with its more radical objectives, was side-lined. It was not to regain influence under New Labour and was eventually incorporated in Cooperatives UK (an amalgamation of CWS and ICOM) in 2001.

Methods

I have been conducting primary archival research in the following archives:

Working Class Movement Library, Salford

People's History Museum, Manchester

Coop Archives, Manchester

Modern Records Centre, Warwick University

I am trained as an intellectual historian and the methods of contextualisation associated with the Cambridge School are fundamental to my work.[iii]

I seek to marry this to the interpretivism of Mark Bevir whose thinking looks to the importance of tradition, dilemma, and action in the context of the webs of belief shared by actors.[iv] The 1970 were just such a moment when these factors came into play within the movement for common ownership.

Results and Discussion

The article is still currently being written up. The goal is publication in the journal *Enterprise and Society*. I would greatly value the comments and ideas of other participants at the conference to help me strengthen the piece.

Contributions and implications

Alternative Models of Ownership have been under renewed consideration on the British left since 2017.[v] There is also a fresh awareness of the need to pursue community wealth building approaches at local level. [vi] Always, environmental issues and the part coops can play in transitioning to a green economy must be foremost in our thinking This article seeks to learn lessons from past experiences and feed into these debates. The goal of this paper is to learn from past experiences as part of an effort to understand the role that worker coops can play within a broader effort to replace the current model of neoliberal political economy.

[i] <https://www.uk.coop/news/new-organisation-worker-co-ops-set-launch-2023>

[ii] Still the best history of this period is Jenny Thornley, *Worker's Cooperatives: Jobs and Dreams* (London: Heineman, 1981)

[iii] Quentin Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', *History and Theory* 8:1 (1969), pp. 3-53

[iv] Mark Bevir, *Interpretive Social Science: An Anti-Naturalist Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)

[v] Report: *Alternative Models of Ownership* (The Labour Party, 2017)

[vi] Joe Guinan and Martin O'Neill, *The Case for Community Wealth Building* (Cambridge: Polity, 2019)

Cooperatives as catalysts for socio-ecological transformation: a participatory systems mapping approach for energy cooperatives in Quebec

Presented by: Janelle, Karl

Authors: Janelle, Karl

Organisations: HEC Montreal

Background

The field of sustainability transitions recognizes that societal issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and inequality are caused by malfunctioning socio-technical systems. Transition studies draw on multiple fields to analyze transitions as a dynamic process occurring at three levels: niches, socio-technical regime, and landscape. Niches represent spaces for disruptive innovation, the socio-technical regime represents the dominant systems and their path-dependency, and the landscape is the wider context in which these systems operate. Change occurs when events at the landscape level (i.e. climate change) create pressure on the regime and offer opportunities for niche innovations to thrive.

The impact of transition studies on a sustainable society is still a matter of debate. They have focused mostly on technological systems, leaving a gap in understanding the role of organizations, especially cooperatives. Cooperatives embody principles such as democratic control, autonomy, and a commitment to community, which suggest they can contribute to reducing inequalities and promoting social justice, localness, and environmentally responsible consumption. The role of cooperatives as niches for sustainability transition needs further exploration, including their role in networks that form a crucial part of the cooperative identity.

Transition researchers also face the challenge of balancing objectivity and impartiality with the desire to contribute to societal transformation. Historically, transition research has relied heavily on historical case studies. However, there is a growing trend towards action research methods and experimentation, such as participatory approaches and real-world labs.

Finally, transition and transformation are often used interchangeably in sustainability research, but they refer to change at different scales. Transition focuses on sub-system changes and technological shifts, while transformation refers to large-scale changes spanning all aspects of society, including socio-ecological interactions. Transition research has primarily focused on how transitions occur and their enabling conditions, while transformation focuses on identifying patterns of change for a collectively defined future. Critics argue that the focus on transitions can lead to a narrow focus on specific systems or technologies, avoiding broader questions of power dynamics and social justice. The field of transition research is often limited to the meso level and may neglect debates at the macro level (e.g. questioning capitalism) or the micro level (e.g. influencing individual behavior).

Aims

This paper aims to address the three gaps in transition studies previously described: the lack of an organizational perspective, the observer of the past rather than action-oriented and forward-looking standpoint, and their inability to lead to significant transformations. This will be achieved by focusing on energy cooperatives in Quebec as a unit of analysis and introducing an action-research method, participatory mapping, to unleash their transformative potential.

Energy cooperatives have a significant impact on reducing electricity demand and decarbonizing certain sectors that rely on fossil fuels. In countries like Germany, Spain, Finland, and the Netherlands, cooperatives are playing a key role in the energy transition. However, while cooperatives make up 14% of GDP in Quebec, there are only a few energy cooperatives; this points to an important untapped opportunity to transform the Quebec energy system. The province has already a high per capita electricity consumption and faces the challenge of raising its energy production by almost 50% within 5 years, notably to meet the increased demand related to massive electrification of transportation. The Quebec government is considering building new hydroelectric dams despite social, environmental, and economic constraints. Energy cooperatives represent a promising alternative as they produce clean, renewable energy in a decentralized and community-driven manner. The participatory and democratic aspects of cooperatives tend to foster member empowerment, which in the case of energy cooperatives translates into more energy efficient behaviors and an equitable approach to meeting the energy needs of all members.

Methods

Following an already ongoing literature review on transition studies, energy cooperatives, and the specificities of the Canadian energy ecosystem, participatory mapping sessions will be conducted with three local energy cooperatives involved in the energy transition in Québec (Canada).

Participatory mapping (PM) is a method of visually representing qualitative research questions through an interactive approach. It involves stakeholders in a group setting to develop a causal map of a particular issue or system. PM was popularized in the 1980s for geography and urban planning and was eventually adopted in studies on complex systems as participatory systems mapping (PSM), which provides a shared understanding of the issue at stake and key leverage points for intervention or change. In the case of cooperatives striving to transform the energy sector, it can shed light on the institutional factors important to consider in order to implement more broadly such social innovations. PSM is a workshop-based process that can increase motivation and understanding among stakeholders, promote consensus, and capture a more comprehensive understanding of the system. It's important to involve a diverse range of stakeholders in the PSM process to ensure a shared grasp of the system and to address power imbalances or conflicting interests. PSM is a collaborative process that requires ongoing dialogue and exchange among stakeholders for a more accurate and holistic understanding of the system.

Results and discussion

The PSM sessions will be conducted this Spring. The first results will be presented at the Conference.

Contributions and Implications

The use of PSM as an action-research method in the context of energy cooperatives contributes to both cooperatives and transition studies. First, it brings the organizational, engaged, and transformational perspective that is often lacking in transition studies by focusing on actively empowering niches seeking disruptive innovation rather than observing macro elements of the

system. Moreover, it sheds light on the transformative potential of cooperatives, which also has important practical implications. PSM can indeed help cooperatives go beyond filling the needs of their members and better face the tendency to follow negative non-congruent isomorphism patterns (when they tend to increasingly behave like regular corporations): instead, cooperatives can see themselves as catalysts for societal transformation and strive to push the institutional boundaries of the social innovations they represent.

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STRENGTHENING CREDIT UNION GOVERNANCE: A participative study into effective credit union governance

Presented by: Jones, Paul Anthony

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Organisations: Liverpool John Moores University, United Kingdom

Background

This paper outlines and analyses the contemporary hot issues in credit union governance emerging from a 2023 collaborative study with credit unions throughout the Caribbean. This study was based on a participative exploration and critique of the Swoboda governance manual, "Towards a systematic approach to credit union governance" (Jones et al. 2017, updated 2019) published initially within the British credit union sector.

Aims, Methodology and Results

In 2017, thirteen British credit unions were engaged in an action research project, based on a participative and collaborative methodology, to develop a systematic approach to strategic governance, bespoke to the credit union sector, that clarified the purpose and dynamics of the board of directors and of its relationship with the CEO and management. The study analysed and explored fourteen key themes within a governance framework based firmly on co-operative values and principles. The recommendations of the study were promoted widely and successfully throughout the British credit union movement to inform credit union practice and establish the specificity of the credit union brand within a competitive, financial market-place.

In 2019, the study was revisited and revised as part of a collaborative Romanian and British EU funded project into strengthening the cooperative financial sector in both jurisdictions. In this project, the findings of the 2017 study were subjected to review by groups of British and Romanian co-operators and discussed in workshops and seminars in close relation to practice. In 2019, the study was republished as, "Manual de guvernare pentru uniunile de credit".

In 2022, a process of revision of the governance manual was initiated the aim of ensuring the work retained contemporary and international relevance throughout the credit unions sector. As an integral part of this revision, in January and February 2023, a comprehensive review was undertaken with 150 directors and CEOs from credit unions throughout the Caribbean. Through a series of 12 online workshops, email threads, discussions and a comprehensive online survey, practitioners discussed, analysed, and debated the hot and contemporary issues in governance in relation to the original study. Findings were captured by Swoboda researchers to inform the republication of the manual in 2024.

Discussion

This paper discusses the real, live, and practical issues in credit union governance faced by Caribbean credit unions and how the exploration of these issues has modified, changed, and developed Swoboda's thinking in credit union governance more generally.

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Cooperativism and 21st century Socialism: Alternatives to extreme capitalism

Presented by: Karamitrou, Lefteris

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Cooperativism and 21st century Socialism:

Alternatives to extreme capitalism

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This presentation attempts to address the relations between cooperatives –as alternative forms of work– and the vision of a 21st century Socialism. The practice of Cooperativism constitutes a common form of self-organization and self-protection for the lower social strata since the beginnings of modern capitalism. We can trace its experimental applications –within the limits of capitalism– as early as the 19th century. In addition, we can trace various forms of it in the visions of utopian and scientific socialism (Owen 2013, Saint-Simon 2016, Proudhon 2007). Cooperatives were parts of revolutionary and reforming programs too. After all, the bonds between cooperative movement and the state is one of the most stable points of confrontation within the left, while the cooperative movement itself constitutes a field where we can meet diverse principles and purposes.

Introductory, this research will try to illuminate the position of the cooperative proposal within the socialist theoretical schemes (Lenin 1920, 1923, San Vicente 2013). The main aim is to update a classic question based on the challenges of the 21st century. This classic question, which remains open, is whether cooperative organization, applied within the limits of global capitalism, can become a means of social transition. In order to better understand this dimension of Cooperativism, we will focus on some large-scale modern applications. In particular, we need to see Cooperativism as part of state policies moving in a socialist direction. For this reason, we choose as examples two states with left-wing governments: Venezuela and Cuba (Azzellini 2013, Ranis 2016). Each of these governments has different characteristics, but both extensively promote Cooperativism at the national level under the vision of "21st century Socialism".

Looking at the above cases into the context of the global dominance of extreme capitalism, we seek to contribute our perspective on the question whether cooperatives can indeed be part of a new type of socialism, more democratic and transparent, which will promote social rather than state ownership of the means of production. In particular, we claim that a strong cooperative sector is at least able to reduce social inequalities, create more fair and stable working conditions, incorporate innovation in more positive ways and limit the effects of climate change. In short, even in adverse conditions, we consider that Cooperativism can be the vanguard of a more fair kind of "market socialism".

We choose to examine the relationship between Cooperativism and Socialism based on universal challenges posed by extreme capitalism nowadays. We consider the most critical of these to be: 1. the flexibility of work, 2. the automation of production and 3. climate change. Elasticization is the norm

on which labor relations are structured, fostering a climate of instability and insecurity (Standing 2011). On this ground, the automation of production, apart from its explosive potential (Bastani 2019), becomes responsible for the reduction of the traditional "proletariat" and, ultimately, its transformation into more flexible social forms. Finally, to the extent that climate change mortgages the possibility of any long-term social vision, its reversal is placed within the immediate priorities of any alternative view of work. We believe, ultimately, that a large-scale cooperative policy must respond to the above challenges.

Through our perspective, we seek to contribute some useful conclusions to a general debate that deals with whether and in what terms the cooperative sector is capable of being an "opponent of awe" of capitalism and the basis of a decentralized and democratic socialism (Mészáros 1995, Reyes and Harnecker 2013). We will address this question through the prism of "workers' self-management" (Wolff 2012) and theories about "market socialism" (Schweickart 1998). Finally, we are interested in the perspective of commons' theories, as a view of the extension of equal and democratic cooperation in "strategic sectors" of the economy and society (Harvey 2011, Bauwens and Kostakis 2014).

Keywords: cooperatives, state, socialism, market

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Indicators for Measuring Cooperative Performance: A review Based on Bibliometric Analysis

Presented by: Kinikli, Filiz

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Cooperatives, which have to compete in the same market as investor owned firms, need to measure and evaluate their performance in order to increase their competitiveness. Generally, researchers have not found exactly objective measures of cooperative performance. Either some studies focus on only financial factors (McKee, 2008; Grashuis, 2018; Rahmah, 2020) or some of them focus on only social factors (Robson et al., 2002; Mahazril et al., 2012; Susanty et al., 2017; Westerholz and Höhler, 2021). However, there is a lack of a systematic literature review that addresses cooperative performance measurement indicators. In this line with, the main aim of this paper is to review and discuss the literature on cooperative performance measurement indicators, taking into consideration the main pillars of bibliometric production.

Based on the use of bibliometrix, this paper investigates the most related sources, authors collaborations, and most cited documents in this area (Agarwal et al., 2016). After applying some criteria, a total of 622 records were collected from the core collection of the Web of Science (WOS) database from 1983 to 2022. The open source statistical tool R and biblioshiny software was performed for analysing and visualizing. It became particularly noteworthy for bibliometric analysis when the most recent literature in a variety of subjects was reviewed (Della Corte et al., 2019; Dervis, 2019; Guida and Caglioni, 2020; Rodríguez-Soler et al., 2020; Santos and Martins, 2021; Wang and Sihong, 2022; Alhamzah et al., 2022; Ciavolino et al., 2022; Abafe et al., 2022).

The source published the most articles about cooperative performance is "Sustainability" and having the most citation source is "Food Policy". Especially last ten years, papers about cooperative performance have started to visibly and rise. Authors made important contribution to the field are more productive when we examined the last ten years. It is remarkable that three authors (Cook, M.L., Hernandez Espallardo, M., and Arcas Lario N.) conducts studies in this field over 20 years. The authors analysis suggests that collaborating authors focused on both economic and social effect of cooperatives. The most cited document published by "Food Policy Journal" in 2009 focused on mostly economic performance indicators. Although related scientific research increases, there are no commonly accepted and applied criteria to measure the performance of cooperatives. It was seen that there is examined the impact of cooperatives on farms' performance in the literature a majority. There should be more focused on measure of cooperative performance both economic and non-economic. Because, the literature shows us the effect of individual farms performance, but the important thing is measure of organizational performance. There are few articles discuss performance measuring indicators or how to use them. We showed that most cited documents have used mainly economic indicators for measuring cooperative performance. However, cooperatives

are socioeconomic organizations, and they are not for profit, so they need to use social indicators for assessing or measuring their performance. If members are dissatisfied with the cooperative, they will not work with it, and the cooperative will not be successful, resulting in lower performance. We believe that social factors such as member satisfaction, loyalty, and commitment, are more significant than economic factors. Because if there are no members, performance or success cannot be mentioned in the cooperative.

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Using Organizational Effectiveness to Assess Performance of Selected Cooperatives in Greece and Turkey

Presented by: Kinikli, Filiz

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Organisations: 1: Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, USA; 2: Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), Sweden

Cooperatives play an important role in global economies. These farmer-owned and operated businesses must be competitive and perform to succeed in today's market-based economy. Researchers in economics and finance have been using the economic and financial numerical metrics to measure the performance of cooperatives (Arcas et al., 2011; USDA, 2007, 2006; etc.). The economic and financial measures of performance are limited and ignore the non-economic or non-financial aspects of a business organization. Expanding the concept of performance measurements of business organizations beyond economic and financial performance measures bring us to the concept of organizational effectiveness, defined as "the efficiency with which an association can meet its objectives." (Pedraza, 2014; Bhuyan and Karantininis, 2023). Organizational effectiveness is an efficiency measure at its core because it involves achieving the best outcome with minimum resources. Existing measures of efficiency in farmer-owned organizations are limited to the traditional economic or financial measures of performance (e.g., Sexton and Iskow, 1993; Soboh et al., 2009; Grashuis and Su, 2019; Skevas and Grashuis, 2020). In this study, we propose Organizational Effectiveness (OE) as a metric of performance for cooperatives that goes beyond the commonly used economic or financial performance indicators. The meaning of OE may vary from organization to organization. Nonetheless, there has been a general consensus among researchers in the organizational behavior domain that there are five main approaches or frameworks to view or measure organizational effectiveness (Schermerhorn et al., 2004; Bhuyan and Karantininis, 2023): System Resources, Strategic Constituency, Goal Attainment; Internal Process, Competing Values. We focus on a number of cooperatives in Turkey, and Greece and utilize the case study approach to fulfil our study objective (Crowe et al, 2011). In-depth interviews was conducted with the leadership of six cooperatives - three in each of the two countries: Greece and Turkey. Strategic Constituency and the Internal Process approaches were utilized them here to assess organizational efficiency of cooperatives. According to the results cooperatives in both Turkey and Greece were organizationally effective because they were able to meet the selected criteria set under those two approaches, e.g., members satisfaction, trust among members, etc. Anecdotally, we also found that these cooperatives were also successful financially, i.e., they were profitable as well. Members' perceptions were assessed in all six coops based on personal relationships and networks among members and boards of directors, while "service to the community" was an overall common goal for the majority of the coops studied.

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The Efficiency Analysis of Cooperative Members and Non-Members: A Case of Dairy Farms in Turkey

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Agricultural organisations in rural areas are one of the important tools in increasing living standards, increasing farmers' income, making better use of the resources and ensuring agricultural development (Inan et al., 2005). It was seen that compared to EU countries, meat and milk yields in Turkey are quite low (FAO, 2022). In sectors where small family farms are concentrated, the sector can be strengthened by solving existing problems through cooperatives. Cooperatives are very important for the sector in terms of providing input supply services and meeting the food needs of farmers in addition to milk collection and processing activities. This study aims to measure the technical efficiency of cooperative members and non-members dairy firms. In the literature, there are many studies conducted about determining the efficiency of dairy firms in Turkey (Koyunbenbe and Candemir, 2006; Nizam and Armağan, 2006; Kaygısız et al., 2018; Gül et al., 2018; Aydemir, 2019; Güler and Saner, 2020), however, there is a little research on comparing members and non-members dairy firms. Moreover, the study aimed to investigate the efficiency differences according to scale of farms and determine the potential improvements to both input and output oriented models. To measure the farm efficiency was used Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) and Tobit regression analysis was used for determining the factors of affect efficiency on farm. This study was conducted in the Izmir where is one of the most important cities about dairy cooperatives and dairy sector in Turkey. It was seen that the dairy farms of nonmembers were more efficient than members. According to scale of farms, it was determined that the efficiency of large-scale farms was higher. In addition, it is noteworthy that the majority of small-scale and efficient farms are cooperative members. Age, household size, provided agronomic services by firms, cooperative membership, and so on, were found to affect farm efficiency. This study concludes that cooperatives are better for small family farms and their efficiency; however, they have capacity issues when compared to IOFs.

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Mutual Health Organisations facing institutional pressures: an analysis of strategic responses

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In a context where an organization faces diverse expectations from various stakeholders, it is important to understand how it reacts to thereto. Some studies have used institutional theory (Oliver, 1991; Clemens and Douglas ,2005; Junior and Gomes, 2019) to analyze managers 'strategic responses associated with stakeholders' expectations. Although organizations are expected to comply with stakeholders' expectations to gain legitimacy or become more efficient (Oliver, 1991), they may also fail to do so with one category of stakeholders or all the stakeholders' expectations. Defiance is yet another possible outcome. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mutual Health Organisations (MHOs), a specific type of cooperatives in the health insurance sector, are characterized by a multiplicity of stakeholders namely members, health care providers, governments, donors, Non-Government Organizations and support structures.

Based on institutional theory, resource dependency theory and stakeholder theory, this study aims to identify the combination of causal conditions associated with strategic responses of MHOs to stakeholders 'expectations in the context of South-Kivu province, in Eastern DRC. More specifically, the study aims to understand managers' perceptions of stakeholder's expectations and identify which ones are predominant and under which conditions MHOs comply with stakeholder's expectations.

We draw on interviews with 26 managers of MHOs operating in the South-Kivu province and analyze the data using fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fs/QCA), a method that investigates combinations of necessary and sufficient conditions for an outcome.

We find evidence to suggest that compliance with MHOs members' expectations is associated with the perceived degree of dependence on MHOs members, the perceived degree legitimacy to be achievable by complying with member's expectations, the perceived degree of performance to be achievable by complying with members 'expectations, the age and the size of the MHO. In addition, compliance with donors' (support structure) expectations is associated with the perceived degree of dependence on donors (support structure), the perceived degree of legitimacy to be achievable by complying with MHOs donor's expectations, the size and the location of the MHO. Moreover, only two conditions lead to the compliance with the expectations from the state. Contrary of other stakeholders,

donors or support structure are predominant and compliance with their expectations are seen by MHOs managers as an important source of legitimacy and performance.

Overall, the findings of the study show clear differences in the combinations of conditions that result in compliance or non-compliance with MHOs stakeholder's expectations, a finding that we discuss in relation to other types of cooperatives. The findings support to a certain extent previous empirical works (Goodstein, 1994; Clemens and Douglas ,2005; Junior and Gomes, 2019) that have used Oliver

(1991)'s theoretical framework. This may be due to the methodology used. It should be noted that most previous studies have used purely quantitative approaches to analyze organizations' strategic responses to institutional pressures. In addition, other studies have utilized Oliver (1991)'s framework (Clemens et Douglas, 2005; Goodstein, 1994) but not within the field of MHOs.

This study contributes to a better understanding of the strategic responses adopted by the MHOs managers facing stakeholder requirements. In addition, it proposes ways to ensure that the MHOs managers' strategic responses are consistent with stakeholders' requirements.

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Risk-taking, information production and the competitive advantage of cooperative banking groups

Presented by: Kohlbacher, Thomas

Authors: Kohlbacher, Thomas; Groeneveld, Hans

Organisations: Tilburg University, Netherlands, The

Current academic research into the effect of cooperative governance on the performance of cooperative banks mainly focusses on the distinctive features of members' incentives and various modes of democratic governance. Member-centricity, instilled through member-based governance, is assumed to be main driver of differences in asset- and liability choices between cooperative and commercial shareholder value banks and, as a result, the bank's ability to serve the needs of its members. Far less attention is paid to the role of cooperative governance arrangements in the efficiency of information production, the adaptation of the theoretical cooperative governance frameworks to the reality within large cooperative banking groups and thorough economic analysis of the sources of competitive advantages of large cooperative banking groups in serving the needs of member-customers.

This article links fundamental insights from the theory of the firm, corporate finance theory, the literature on bank business models and the literature on cooperative governance to provide thorough theoretical analysis of potential sources of competitive advantages of large cooperative banking groups over their commercial counterparts in diversified retail banking. Starting from the fundamental economic notion that bank business models as well as governance structures could be seen as market choices in finding the most efficient way to trade specific kinds of risks, it aims to disentangle the effect of the choice of business models and governance structures on bank performance. It, thus, provides a framework through which the effect of ownership – and governance structures of cooperative banking groups conditional on the business model of (diversified) retail banking may be assessed. It then proposes a stylized model of a modern cooperative banking group, which captures distinct elements of decentralized decision-making, internal control structures through the apex institution and the financial claim-structures of different claimants, which are characteristic of large, modern cooperative banking groups. Within this stylized model, it suggests that there are two major sources of competitive advantage for cooperative banking groups in diversified retail banking. First, the given governance structure offers efficiency advantages in monitoring and incentivization. Second, the internal structure of cooperative banking groups offers various commitment devices, which enable longer-run value creation. The extent to which members' ownership and distribution rights and the presence of a long-term endowment within the cooperative bank enable these competitive advantages to be harnessed will also be discussed.

Thus, theoretical analysis suggests that there are competitive advantages for cooperative banking groups over their commercial counterparts in diversified retail banking. These efficiency advantages cannot be captured purely based on notions of member-based governance, but require holistic analysis of modern cooperative banking groups' internal governance structure. The understanding of

these competitive advantages from a theoretical point of view not only informs an evaluation of long-term survivability of the cooperative banking model, but also of its ability to provide an efficient institutional framework for intermediation and the trade of risks in future markets. Hence, this article adds to the literature by addressing gaps in our current framework to analyze the governance structures of large cooperative banking groups and contributes to our understanding of the advantages of cooperative ownership—and governance structures per se.

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Co-operative innovation towards social and ecological sustainability: Case of Co-op Sapporo

Presented by: Kurimoto, Akira

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Organisations: Japan Co-operative Alliance, Japan

1. Background: Hokkaido in the far north territory faces the problems of shrinking and aging population, declining industries and economy that bring about devastated local communities. Co-op Sapporo was set up as an extension of Hokkaido University Co-op in 1965 aiming at protecting consumers' life through providing safe and reliable food and combatting 'Hokkaido price' higher than the national average due to the logistics reason and inefficient distribution system. It has made the strategic renewal after the financial crises in 1990s through the consolidation of all consumer co-ops in Hokkaido, securing whole population's access to food and other lifelines. It has grown to one of three mega-retailers in Hokkaido occupying 23.6 % of food market and the second largest consumer co-op in Japan despite serious impediments such as the complete ban of non-member trade and the limited operating area within prefectures imposed by the Consumer Co-operative Act.

2. Aims: this paper aims to clarify how Co-op Sapporo has made innovations to secure population's access to food, and accomplish the social and ecological sustainability.

3. Methods: Case study based on the second source of information, statistics and interviews.

4. Results and discussion: Co-op Sapporo introduced various innovations towards economic, social and ecological sustainability combining member's activities with business operations. It has organized a majority of consumers on the island through the organic growth and a number of mergers to save the ailing citizen co-ops and coal-miners co-ops. It operates more than 100 supermarkets of various size and formats while it runs shopping buses and mobile shops to serve consumers living in the remote area who might otherwise face the food desert problem. It also runs the home delivery of food and kerosine oil throughout the island. As a result, it became a unique retailer that can assure the entire population an access to food and indispensable commodities. It is providing meal-on-wheels for the elderly, and runs the community-wide health program to prevent them from falling into frail and dementia. The initiatives for ecological sustainability are taken through combining consumer learning with business operations; promoting eco-friendly 'My bag' and 'Bring Your own bottle' campaigns aiming at reducing consumption of plastics, recycling papers, plastics, cans and used cooking oils, and promoting renewable energy and the future forest project. Co-op publishes yearly SDGs books and plays a hub role steering the SDGs platform together with municipalities and industries in Hokkaido. Thus, it can be evaluated that Co-op Sapporo has practiced the innovation towards social and ecological sustainability, making the strategic renewal practicing the ambidexterity of exploiting the current business opportunities and exploring the future business potentials.

5. Contributions and implication: Co-op Sapporo has made the dramatic turnaround from a near-bankrupt co-operative to the most successful one through introducing a number of innovations. In the shrinking economy and depopulating society, it accomplished its mission to meet member's needs and aspirations while enhancing social and environmental sustainability. It has demonstrated the co-operative movement can sustain people's life even in the disadvantageous environment if it is governed with active member's participation and led by the effective leadership. Thus, Co-op Sapporo's case has contributed to showcasing the potential of co-operative business model while it has broad implications to the businesses facing the adversarial environment.

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DO BUSINESS SCHOOLS HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY IN CAPACITY BUILDING FOR ALTERNATIVE BUSINESS MODELS?

Presented by: Kuznetsov, Andrei

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Background

Unlike corporate management and entrepreneurship, competence building for alternative economy visibly lacks adequate intellectual support from of the mainstream academia.

Aims

Our study argues for the need to correct the focus of the education provision by universities to ensure a tighter fit with changing business conditions favouring plurality and new societal demands favouring participatory democracy.

Methods

Interview-based quantitative analysis. The evidence presented has been collated internationally from interviews with academics and co-operative practitioners performed as a part of a funded research project.

Results

We offer a 'landscape review' to reflect on the state-of-the-art assessment of the gap between competencies and knowledge needed to boost the role of the cooperative sector in a modern economy and the supply of research and training through HE, specifically addressing related capabilities and skill shortages.

Based on the collected evidence, the preliminary findings suggest that

- o educational programmes in the co-operative sector tend to be somewhat inward-looking and insular in their approach to management education and management skills training, as they tend to focus on the specifics of experiences within co-operatives rather than the general fundamentals of management as developed by mainstream business and management research
- o as a result, co-operatives may be disadvantaged in accessing (and by implications being able to adopt) the cutting-edge management know-how
- o the cooperative model nurtures enterprise with a social purpose; is important for perpetuating market plurality and yet it remains on the periphery of the management and organisational research. Early career researchers are reluctant to dedicate their time to the research

of the cooperative economy because they do not see it as a promising career path (e.g., lack of interest on the part of leading academic journals and major academic conferences)

- o insufficient interaction of academia with the cooperative economy potentially weakens the influence of the cooperative model on the social orientation of the mainstream business
- o business schools have a role to play in enlisting scholarly resources in actions helping to embrace co-operatives not as an alternative and peripheral business model, but as a legitimate mainstream player. The most obvious steps include updating the curriculum to include references to the cooperative economy, recruiting new researchers into the field, e.g., via doctoral training and priority funding, developing research and a new agenda in collaboration with the co-operative movement
- o intellectually, developing and disseminating knowledge about the co-operative sector within academia can foster critical thinking required to find solutions to complex social and economic issues faced by the modern market economy.

Discussion

We offer a critical reflection on the evidence that indicates disconnectedness of the co-operative economy and academia.

Contributions and implications

The paper/presentation explores the roots of this disconnectedness and explains how this denies the co-operative sector an opportunity to address its shortages in skills and acquire managerial capabilities needed to boost the presence and impact of the co-operative enterprise.

The study lays intellectual foundations that rationalise the involvement of academia, and business schools in particular, in enhancing societal gains by accepting the co-operative sector as a legitimate and valuable constituent of a modern economy and reflecting this in its teaching and research.

The study lays foundations for the international cross-sectoral initiatives that can be delivered by academia in collaboration with the co-operative sector.

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Coop resilience in a VUCA era: theoretical framework, methodological implications, and evidence

Presented by: Lamprinakis, Lampros

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Within the mainstream European and Anglo-Saxon traditions, a cooperative (hereafter coop) is generally understood to be a socio-economic organization comprised of voluntary membership and one which espouses the principles of democracy (Ortmann and King 2007, Novkovic 2008). It therefore allows for an environment wherein diverse groups of people willingly agree to work together on the basis of a set of guiding principles, while at the same time members are able to, directly or indirectly, influence cooperative decisions and institutional development. The International Cooperative Alliance defines a coop as “an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically-controlled enterprise” (ICA 2005).

Cooperatives are therefore unique socio-economic organizations that have proven to be particularly resilient (Billiet et al., 2021; Birchall & Ketilson, 2009), and a large and ever-expanding body of literature highlights the critical importance of member commitment, not only for coop performance but for their very existence (Fulton, 1999; Fulton and Giannakas, 2001; Fulton and Giannakas, 2006). Meyer and Allen (1997) discuss on two types of commitment for coop members: affective and continuance (or calculative) commitment. The former reflects on the degree in which an agent “wants” to remain a member of the coop, while the latter relates to the degree in which a coop member “needs” to remain with coop. In more practical terms, continuance commitment is typically pecuniary, while affective is nonpecuniary and can be understood through the lens of ethical and cultural ideology. It is the level commitment that partly can reflect the degree of embeddedness of a coop.

The concept of embeddedness became popular from Polanyi, that used the term to describe situations in which business activities are in tandem with local traditions, norms, and social relations – hence the economic, social, and cultural elements of an organization are intertwined and inseparable (Polanyi Symposium, 2004). It is an ongoing, engaging, and active process to shape an economy that is morally ingrained in the society and where economic activities and social norms naturally inform each other: economic activities are both structured and influenced by moral norms, while those norms are also influenced by economic conditions. The main hypotheses of the article are H(a): the coops have the capacity to naturally exhibit high degrees of embeddedness, and H(b): because of their high embeddedness, coops are potentially better positioned to address the increasing challenges stemming from VUCA – i.e., when world systems operate under Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity (Clegg et al., 2019): Volatility reflects on the nature, dynamics, and speed of the change forces; Uncertainty relates to the lack of predictability and insights on how the situation can develop; Complexity characterizes the causality among change forces, prevalent

issues, and observed situations; Ambiguity, finally, pertains the understanding of reality and its meaning for the organization (Bennett and Lemoine, 2014).

In addressing these hypotheses, we have a threefold aim: first to expand existing theoretical underpinnings supporting coop resilience and their capacity for increased embeddedness, second to develop the coop theory on resilience under VUCA conditions, and finally to empirically explore these concepts in a comparative case study. In doing so we adopt a mixed methods approach where we reintroduce embeddedness in order to enhance existing coop theory that then is used to inform our qualitative study focusing on coop leaders and stakeholders in Norway and Greece. Our results reflect both on the theoretical background on the role and operations of coops but also illustrate how contemporary coop agents relate to this theoretical approach while facing increasing VUCA challenges in terms of global health emergencies (COVID-19), geopolitical tensions (war on eastern Europe), and economic turbulence (high inflation). Therefore, the ambition of this article is to contribute to the coop theory and our understanding of the coop role in the era of VUCA, while comparing and contrasting the understanding of contemporary coop actors facing the VUCA challenges.

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Inter-cooperatives governance in meta-organization to face transition challenges

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Some studies have pointed out the interest of meta-organisations as bottom-up multi-stakeholder structures that can help the development of sustainable innovation (such as SFSC) which in turn help fostering sustainable transition (Berkowitz, 2018; Berkowitz et al., 2020; Berkowitz & Bor, 2018; Corazza et al., 2021). Indeed, meta-organization can help building and diffusing capabilities to empower sustainable innovations. They facilitate information's sharing and collective learnings, they increase innovation's capacity to adapt to changing circumstance (resilience), they enforce accountability of members, etc. As such, the concept of meta-organisation has been increasingly used with respect to sustainable transition issues (among others : Lapoutte, 2021; Rudolph et al., 2020; Valente & Oliver, 2018; Villet et al., 2020).

Moreover the concept of meta-organization describes a coordination arrangement, or as Berkowitz would say, a "governance device" (2018) that provides a formal structure for gathering multiple, autonomous units. As such, meta-organization are increasingly interesting researchers as device potentially able to manage complex systems or "commons"[1] such as food (Lapoutte, 2021) or the ocean (Rudolph et al., 2020).

Although there are numerous studies on joint-ventures, strategic alliances, cooperation partnership, etc. in classical management and organizations studies, the social economy literature has only shown little interest about cooperation among cooperatives (and other forms of social enterprises). This is all the more intriguing that cooperation with cooperatives is the 6th IAC principle.

This study is built on qualitative data collected from 2018 to 2022 through several research projects looking into alternative food supply chain in Wallonia (Belgium). For most, it is the result of PhD research conducted within the DISEIN-Food project (2018-2021) and directly focusing on the 5C Collective as a unique organization (for its novelty, its size, its increasing legitimacy, etc.), exemplifying strong cooperation between food alternatives. The main empirical material consists of data obtained through participatory observations of various meetings: all 5C board meetings from 2018 to 2020, two annual retreat weekends as well as several thematic workshops dealing with some of 5C's projects. The data were completed with several semi-conducted interviews, focus groups and internal document analysis.

The analyses of 5C reveals two different meta-organizational features that are useful. First, we show that a meta-organization who's providing a real and formal place of trust for members to meet, exchange, and debate is enabling one of the three advantages of a functional polycentric system: institutional fit. Indeed, 5C's secretariat arrange regular meetings where members can discuss ideas, objectives and actions. Since 5C is a meta-organization with democratic processes, no hierarchy or central authority, each cooperative can defend its interest and point of view freely. Divergences of practices between heterogeneous members are discussed and explained. Then, democratic

mechanisms are used to assess what would be the right approach among the variety of practices in order to solve a given problem, in a specific context.

Secondly, it seems that an institutionalized representative body for the internal governance of the polycentric system helps reducing the cost of cooperation between members. Indeed, an internal governance body, helps create general rules of conduct (according to what was democratically debated) and incentivize members to respect them in order to ease cooperation between them. This findings goes along with Roux & Lecocq's research about meta-organization's secretariat being the necessary evil (Roux & Lecocq, 2022). However, in contrast with Roux & Lecocq, our first finding suggests that maintaining autonomy, independence and sovereignty of each member is key. The internal governance body must respect the fundamentals of polycentricity (among which the autonomy and independence of members) in order to enable polycentricity's advantages (adaptative capacity, institutional fit and mitigation of risk).

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[1] " [...] a non-state, non-private shared resource that can only be protected if stakeholders who depend on it take collective responsibility for preservation and restoration with selfdevised protocols, values and norms." (Rudolph et al., 2020, p. 1)

From peasant cooperatives to agroecological cooperatives: challenges of the transition in Chile

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Background

As in all of Latin America, the creation of peasant cooperatives in Chile had its historical maximum in the framework of the Agrarian Reform process, initiated in the sixties of the last century. Subsequently, after the Dictatorship period, a brief boom in the scenario of the Transition to Democracy was interrupted by the Asian Crisis, globalization and the neoliberal reorientation of economic development policies. Starting in the last decade and hand in hand with growing critics about the sustainability and equity of the development model followed by Chile, changes in the General Law of Cooperatives and in the environment of promotion policies have reactivated the creation of cooperatives in the peasant sector. However, unlike the cooperatives of the sixties, created to achieve scale and reduce costs in order to supply basic food to the internal market; and unlike the cooperatives created in the 1990s, which sought to articulate this offer with international markets, the recently created peasant cooperatives are characterized by assuming an agroecological identity and having a relatively smaller number of associates, focusing on niches domestic market with greater ability to pay, interested in the nutritional and ecological quality of food.

Aim

This article sizes and characterizes the creation of peasant cooperatives that assume organic, agroecological and related identity.

Method

Based on the statistical analysis of the Registry of Cooperatives of the Ministry of Economy, Development and Tourism and the Registry of Legal Entities Taxpayers of the Internal Revenue Service, the emerging process of creation of agroecological cooperative is characterized. In the same way, based on a documentary review and interviews with key informants, demographic, economic and socio-cultural characteristics of the members of these cooperatives are identified.

Result and discussion

Based on the analysis carried out, the fact that the creation of agroecological cooperatives is a recent process stands out, highlighting its relationship with the phenomenon of the return to the countryside of children of peasant families who were studying technical or professional studies and with the migration of urban families with greater education to rural areas, trends that worsened in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Contributions and implications

This article contributes to overcoming the existing gaps in the production and analysis of statistical information on the cooperative sector in Chile and on peasant cooperatives, in particular. In the same way, it identifies as main challenges a regulatory framework that does not recognize new rural inhabitants as part of peasant sector; and a scientific-technical institutional framework oriented by the pharmaceutical and petrochemical industries, which constitutes a block to a possible agroecological transition.

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Disclosing the functioning of the Marcora Act framework: legislation of Italian worker takeovers

Presented by: Lomuscio, Marco

Authors: Lomuscio, Marco

Organisations: University of Trento, Italy

Background:

In 1985, Italian policymakers enacted an industrial legislation to favour the start-up and consolidation of worker takeovers to preserve employment levels of distressed companies. Law 49/1985, also known as the Marcora Act, provides worker and social cooperatives with risk and debt capital to promote worker-takeover operations and consolidate target cooperatives. Despite its central role, the Marcora Act is seconded by a spectrum of ancillary laws and norms, and comes into force in conjunction with insolvency, industrial and social security laws. On the one hand, these seconding norms strengthen the provisions of the Marcora Act; on the other, they secure workers and companies with additional and independent benefits. In this regard, the corpus of laws which pertain to the Marcora Act framework is loosely integrated, stratified and rooted in different law codes.

Aims:

To ease the access and interpretation of the legislation of worker takeovers, the paper identifies the leading funding schemes in favour of Italian worker takeovers, addresses the sources of legislation and the functioning of support mechanisms, and debates the pitfalls of the application of the Marcora Act framework.

Methods:

By leveraging a doctrinal legal research methodology, the paper investigates “what is the law?” in the context of Italian worker takeovers and identifies the core features of such legislation.

Results and discussion:

The analysis identifies a series of potential adjustments to the current regulations regarding, above all, the use of the unemployment benefit to capitalise the start-up of novel cooperatives, the implementation of regional policies and the missing link between the Marcora Act and the new insolvency law code.

Contributions and implications:

Such a debate is of great value also for policymakers, practitioners and researchers willing to introduce Marcora Act-like initiatives in their home countries, since it shows the pros and cons of supporting mechanisms.

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Going collective: Italian worker takeovers

Presented by: Lomuscio, Marco

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Background:

In the fields of cooperative and employee participation studies, worker takeovers (WTs), also known as worker buyouts, worker-recuperated or worker-recovered enterprises, stand as an autonomous object of analysis. WTs address the recovery of going concerns and distressed companies, whose crises are mostly due to recessions, restructurings or inheritance and succession issues. In these cases, either in presence of labour struggles or negotiated agreements, companies or one of their branches are leveraged by and transferred to employees. WT operations are great opportunities to preserve communities and territories affected by economic crises.

Aims:

The paper aims at disclosing key features of Italian WT operations, namely reindustrialisation strategies, by providing evidence on the start-up of these socio-economic initiatives. Italian WTs are internationally renowned for their legislation and the intertwining with the cooperative movement. So far, however, researchers have collected sparse evidence on how workers achieve takeovers, which resources they use, how they invest these resources and who join the governance of new cooperatives. This information is essential to evaluate and, potentially, improve supporting actions and policies in favour of WTs.

Methods:

This paper provides novel and unexploited data on the start-up of Italian WTs. Data were collected via an online survey conducted between June and September 2021. The online survey, issued during the pandemic restrictions, was meant to collect data on the former companies, the transition/conversion phase of WTs, and the set-up of novel worker and social cooperatives. Survey data are both quantitative and qualitative.

Results and discussion:

Findings show that the emergence of WTs is heavily affected by insolvency procedures as for the timings, the involvement of administrators and judicial officers, the sources of financing and the areas of expenditures. In addition, data reveals that the use of the unemployment allowance to capitalise the start-up of novel cooperatives is the sine qua non of WT operations. The use of this source of financing, which exposes workers to high risks, is not adequately balanced by guarantees issued by public and regional authorities. Furthermore, data shows that WT operations are canonical cooperative initiatives, neither as radical as Argentinian ones, nor last resort options as in the UK or Germany.

Contributions and implications:

Findings reveal that workers are able to extricate themselves from bad management, inheritance issues or emerging economic crises. Thanks to the support offered by cooperative federations and mutualistic funds, workers accrue the necessary financial resources from a broad pool of financing opportunities, among which the use of the unemployment benefit stands. Results confirm that Italian trade unions, regional authorities and local community members play marginal roles. As cooperative companies, Italian WT's mostly leverage the solid support of cooperative organisations, such as federations of cooperatives, which provide technical and legal support, financial resources and managerial training. Supporting organisations are, as a matter of fact, vital for the development of WT initiatives in Italy and, potentially, for the development of similar initiatives in other countries.

The role of cooperatives in promoting the farmer–industry linkages: lessons from Tanga dairy

Presented by: Makundi, Hezron Ronald

Authors: Makundi, Hezron Ronald

Organisations: University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

This paper investigates the smallholder farmer–industry linkages using a case of the Tanga Dairy innovation system. The study explores modalities used to link up the local dairy farmers to the Tanga Fresh industrial firm while drawing lessons for the broad dairy sector in Tanzania. The study is informed by a survey conducted on 100 dairy farmers in Tanga, through questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Key informants for the study were drawn from dairy cooperative unions in Muheza and Tanga districts, a dairy research center, a livestock training center, and relevant local government authorities. The study revealed that; a mix of formal and informal contractual arrangements are used to link the Tanga Dairy Cooperative Union, dairy farmers, and the Tanga Fresh firm. The industrial firm and local farmers benefited a great deal of improved technologies brought by the Dutch-based shareholder. Farmers have leveraged trading relations, investor-imposed standards, and supportive learning thus improving their productivity and consequently socio-economic conditions. From such findings, interventions are needed to address the evolving challenge of declining trust and commitment between farmers, cooperatives, and the firm leading to divergences from their contractual obligations. The study concludes that the ‘Tanga Dairy model’ can be adopted by other livestock zones in Tanzania, including Arusha, Manyara, Kilimanjaro, Mbeya, Mara, and Bukoba, with improved contractual arrangements between farmers and processing firms.

Cooperative, Innovation, Tanzania, Netherlands, Industry linkages

Women on the boards of Belgian cooperatives: (in)equality and commitment

Presented by: Marlier, Zoé

Authors: Marlier, Zoé

Organisations: UMONS, Belgium

This research focuses on women directors of cooperatives in Belgium, and more specifically on their commitment, largely unpaid, on the boards of these enterprises.

Although the literature on this specific subject is almost non-existent, many authors have examined related topics. Within the boards of directors of the 'classical' economy, contextual elements favouring the presence of women in these places of power have been highlighted: the rate of female employees (Esteban-Salvador et al., 2019), the size of the company, the history, the growth, the sector of the firm (Galia & Zenou, 2013; Toé, 2014) or the importance of the company on the stock market (St-Onge & Magnan, 2013). Other research has studied the impact of diversity on the comparative performance of these organisations (Nielsen & Huse, 2010).

Another part of the literature focuses on the roles and specificities of cooperative boards, including the importance given to social aspects in their functioning (Allemand et al., 2013).

Crossing interests in the social economy and gender, other authors (Aris, 2013; Bigey, 2020; ILO, 2015; Nippierd, 2012; Parente & Martinho, 2018) have emphasised the under-representation of women in decision-making bodies such as boards.

However, most of this research has been conducted in so-called 'developing' countries, and has focused on the agricultural sector (Duguid & Weber, 2016). There is little research conducted on women in the management bodies of the social (and solidarity) economy and, more specifically, cooperatives (Duguid & Weber, 2016; Rawlings & Shaw, 2016).

Based on the analysis of 25 interviews with women directors, this paper aims to explore the (unpaid) female commitment on the boards of cooperatives in various sectors.

Cooperatives, as enterprises of the social (and solidarity) economy, claim to be attentive to democratic management, participation, solidarity, use of profits, etc. but they are also governed by the seven cooperative principles defined by the International Cooperative Alliance. In this sense, cooperatives are examples for the professional work in terms of equality, especially gender equality. Based on these elements, it is legitimate to question the context of women's commitment to cooperatives, recently reformed in Belgium, at a time when feminist demands and a certain loss of meaning of work in its classic organisational forms are developing.

Answering this question requires considering a multitude of factors both on the side of the cooperative structure (gender policies, election and voting procedures, equity principles, size, sector of activity, etc.) and on that of the women who are involved: sociocultural profiles, motivations, previous career paths, perception of their involvement, and the relationship of their involvement to the domestic and professional spheres.

This contribution will show that although an apparent equality (of conditions) within the boards of cooperatives (speaking positions, division of tasks) is an undeniable attraction that facilitates commitment, little has been concretely put in place around these issues. The sector of activity influences the experiences of these women, as does the form of cooperative: citizen or worker, in a sector seeking volunteers or not. The profile of the directors (level of education, age, marital status) is also an essential element in understanding their commitment and, in particular, the link between this work (often voluntary) and their private life. In this sense, there are many tensions between board commitment and the family sphere.

Cooperatives do not therefore specifically address gender issues on boards of directors, but boards are nevertheless fewer unequal places of engagement than the rest of the professional work or society, even if inequalities of position persist.

Such research contributes to a better understanding of the different profiles of women involved in cooperative boards. Furthermore, it would help to identify the elements that favour their commitment and thus fight against their under-representation.

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Cooperative contributions to sustainable tourism

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Background

The rise of platform capitalism has produced new challenges through, among others, the tourism industry as its vehicle: from the impact of AirBnB on local communities, gentrification and decimation of life in urban centres, to Uber-ization of the local transport industry, platform capitalism also changed the world of work. The lack of protection for gig workers and social insecurity gave rise to platform cooperativism (Scholz, 2016).

Aims and methods

The paper discusses platform cooperative contributions to sustainable tourism, recognizing other types of cooperatives on the ground that contribute to sustainability in multiple types of services, and in agritourism. The research analyses three European cooperatives operating in the field of sustainable tourism and using technologies in different ways, dialoguing with the theoretical assumptions of platform cooperativism. The methods used for the research are qualitative and integrate semi-structured interviews with text analysis (e.g., websites and documents suggested by the interviewees).

Results and discussion

Cooperative enterprises are collectively owned and controlled by their members – ‘users’ – who engage with the cooperative as consumers, producers, workers, or community members. Cooperatives are known to contribute to sustainability in all its facets – social, environmental, and economic – since they are democratically governed and typically organized to counterbalance negative ‘externalities’ of the dominant capitalist economic paradigm (Brown et al. 2015; Novkovic, 2021)

Cooperative platforms contribute to sustainable communities in several ways (Martinelli et al., 2019). FairBnB intends to engage all stakeholders in democratic decision-making, but almost immediately their purpose is to develop communities in which visitors reside. Les oiseaux de passage extends tourism into Marseilles’ poor communities and caters visits to the needs of the local citizens. Doc Servizi provides social security and income smoothing to its members-freelancers in the entertainment industry, housing a travel agency to reduce the costs of travel for its stakeholders.

Contributions and implications

The analysis and comparison of the three different cooperative models operating in tourism aim to open up the reflection on several issues: the role that cooperatives can also play in the traditional tourism sector, opening up to sustainable and social tourism practices; the analysis of the different

types of governance that arise when the cooperative model encounters the classic dynamics of tourism (e.g. the relationship between host and guest); studying how platform technologies orient and impact cooperatives' activities, both from the point of view of the business model and governance. Starting from these premises, one of the hypotheses the research aims to verify is that the cooperative values and principles lead the cooperatives studied to be naturally aligned with the principles of sustainable and social tourism, in which it is important to emphasise the community dimension and belonging to a territory.

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The role of cooperatives in the preservation of cultural heritage and traditions

Presented by: Martinelli, Francesca

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Organisations: 1: Centro Studi Doc Foundation, Italy; 2: International Cooperatives Alliance; 3: Art.coop

Background

The objective of this research is to analyse the relationship between cooperatives and intangible cultural heritage. By tangible and intangible cultural heritage we mean the cultural heritage that does not end with monuments and collections of objects. It also includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts. All over the world, cooperatives have a close relationship with the preservation of these cultural heritages. Indeed, there are examples of cooperatives created to safeguard craft traditions and bring them into contemporary times, cooperatives that manage important cultural sites (e.g. museums, monuments, ...), cooperatives that manage theatres or other cultural centres.

Aims and methods

This research is a continuation of ongoing research which has the final goal to map the current state of play of cooperatives in safeguarding in/tangible cultural heritage, as well as the status and potential in cultural and creative sectors. The first step of the research analysed some case studies at international level to understand the role that cooperatives could play in the cultural and creative sectors and define the context within which to carry out a more comprehensive mapping of co-operatives in the cultural and creative sectors. The second step aims to define a theoretical perspective around the relationship between cooperatives and in/tangible cultural heritage. Being a preliminary work to a mapping exercise, the research first aims to identify the main theoretical references and then to analyse a series of representative case studies. For this, the methods used will be qualitative, combining text analysis with semi-structured interviews.

Results and discussion

The comparison between the cooperative movement and the topic of cultural in/tangible goods is intended to provide an opportunity to learn more about the implications between the two worlds. Cooperatives can benefit greatly from encountering such assets, which are increasingly valued. Cooperatives can, on the other hand, valorise both tangible and intangible assets. Cooperative management of tangible assets makes it possible, for instance, to restore places that would otherwise be abandoned. Cooperatives can also valorise intangible assets, i.e. practices, representations, expressions, knowledge or fundamental skills. Indeed, such goods only exist if they are recognised by communities, groups or individuals. Cooperatives have always had the ability to bring communities together around a shared need and build resilient shared projects.

Contributions and implications

The research aims to initiate a serious dialogue among stakeholders in the policy and research space concerning cooperatives for supporting in/tangible cultural heritage, premising this need on the 2016 inscription of the idea and practice of organizing shared interests into cooperatives as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in the Representative List of UNESCO. The paper will establish a theoretical framework elaborating on the value, opportunities, and challenges of cultural heritage, and builds on the existing and potential connection between it and the cooperative movement.

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Can producer's organizations impact value chain sustainability? A systematic review.

Presented by: Mechri, Aicha

Authors: Mechri, Aicha (1); Haenke, Hendrick (2); Martens, Katrin (1); Hanisch, Markus (1)

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Global socio-ecological crises have driven dialogues among governments, practitioners, research communities and activists on how to make food systems more sustainable. Yet, it is not clear how the interplay between actors competing at the market and policy regulations may lead to sustainable outcomes. In this regard, farmers' organizations are portrayed as propitious for addressing sustainability concerns in a variety of discourses surrounding alternative solutions to the current state of food systems. As aggregators of produce, collective processors and marketing agents, farmer's organizations as the primary players in addressing sustainability challenges in a range of discourses surrounding possible solutions to the existing concerns of food systems. More specifically, farmers' organizations are considered as change agents since they work on principles and collective values that advocate for transformation towards sustainability and aim to adhere to aspects of collectiveness, equality, solidarity and democratic decision-making.

Despite the increasing awareness that transformation of food systems to sustainability has to happen primarily within planetary boundaries, there is still no comprehensive review on how farmer groups may contribute to this transformation by navigating simultaneously among their economic agenda, the environmental sustainability and social justice goals. Neither has the sustainability conceptualizations been focused around the primacy of the environmental degradation and the social inequality when looking at the role of the farmer's organizations.

The intended contribution of this paper is twofold: firstly, it is mapping and organizing the body of knowledge on the theme of sustainability effects of farmers' organizations along value chains. This is done by considering the role played by farmer groups along different value chain stages (production, retail and consumption) and for different value chain types (domestic, export, short, long). Secondly, the paper is exploring the role played by the farmers' organizations in ensuring synergies (instead of trade-offs) among environmental, social and economic goals as a basis for a transition towards sustainable food systems.

The paper is structured as following: the theoretical framework starts with the conceptualization of food system sustainability as a radical social (and economic) change that has to happen within planetary boundaries. After introducing the methodological approach and the protocol related to the systematic review process, the paper will discuss the results of the screened papers and cluster the findings according to its conceptualization of sustainability. Bringing empirical evidence and concepts together, the paper discusses the potential roles farmer organizations may play in food system transformation towards sustainability and explores the role played by the farmers groups in preserving and regenerating their natural environment while meeting social and economic goals. Finally, taking into account the results of the literature review and identified knowledge gaps, a

conceptual framework linking the current state of knowledge to the theoretical framework will enable the future identification of the contribution of farmer's organizations to sustainability.

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Sustainable and social regional innovation through cooperatives in Germany

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Abstract:

The panel aims to provide theoretical and empirical insights into social and regional innovation through cooperatives in Germany. There is extensive evidence that cooperatives were linked to social movements throughout history and are themselves a movement deeply connected to social justice. At the same time, the cooperative model has also been a springboard for social innovation (Novkovic/Golja 2015). Cooperatives may enhance the ability of their members to take action as autonomous participants in the market society and create opportunities for exploring alternative forms of cooperative living. By doing so, cooperatives widen the horizon of imaginable alternatives to a status quo that is considered insufficient (Hettlage 1990). While their unique contributions to renewing the public sector or the economy have already been discussed widely (e.g. Pestoff 2021), their distinctive potential for regional development is rarely investigated in detail.

This panel explores the distinct role of cooperatives regarding regional development by creating stable and sustainable infrastructures and by revealing diverse transformative potentials: On the one hand, cooperatives improve and secure the socio-economic situation of their members, thereby fostering their abilities and opportunities to act as autonomous/sovereign participants in both economy and society. On the other hand, cooperatives expand the horizons of imaginable futures by providing local, small-scale solutions to overarching problems. By either securing, controlling, or renewing infrastructures through joint, democratic (i.e., cooperative) efforts, new possibilities for action emerge that were not possible (or imaginable) before.

To describe cooperatives as an organization, their hybridity will be discussed, and they will be placed in relation to the third sector "that [...] is not part of the government, any profits are usually reinvested for social, environmental or cultural aims, and participation is largely voluntary" (Alexander 2010, p. 213). Their hybridity results from the specific connections of self-interest and common welfare orientation and different organizational forms and logics (Blome-Drees and Moldenhauer 2021, pp. 269–273).

To examine the specific role of cooperatives for the region and the region for cooperatives, the proposed panel combines one conceptual framework with three empirical examples. The first contribution examines the subtype of social cooperatives and their role in Germany. It takes a close look at the increase in the number of social cooperatives founded and the variety of different forms. The second contribution reports partial results from a project on the creation and design of public welfare-oriented supply structures (www.teilgabe.net). The focus of this presentation is on the fulfillment of social and health-related services by senior citizens' cooperatives as well as needs with regard to the establishment of an umbrella organization for these services/organizations. The third contribution, in turn, takes a look at the business models of German cooperative banks. With their underlying promotional mission, internal structure, and inherent distance to the international capital markets, cooperatives seem to be well prepared for the new European requirements for sustainable finance. Using a case study, the presentation will show that German cooperative banks' business models, based on specific characteristics imply essential aspects of sustainability. Moreover, the case study examines to what extent the constantly changing regulatory framework influences these very business models. Fourth, the link between regional or spatial responsibility and the corporate culture of cooperatives is investigated using a case study of a German cooperative bank. The study presented highlights the prerequisites of commitment towards common welfare and develops a theoretical as well as a methodological framework for further empirical research, drawing on and aiming to contribute to recent developments in field and network theory as well as relational sociology in general.

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Social Performance Indicators in Health Cooperatives

Presented by: Moreira, Vilmar Rodrigues

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Cooperatives have the great challenge of generating economic-financial results to maintain themselves in a highly competitive market and promote policies that aim to meet the expectations (economic and non-economic) of their members, simultaneously. This demands an effective management in the economic-financial and social perspectives aiming at the sustainability and reach of its objectives. Social management in cooperatives is understood as the management of the relationship with the cooperative members and their participation in the membership, in addition to fostering the feeling of belonging, identity, loyalty, and trust between the members and the cooperatives (Amodeo, 2006). In Brazilian healthcare system, cooperatives operate in the private subsystem, which covers the services provided by supplementary healthcare and autonomous private services. As health plan operators, they offer citizens health plans and insurance (Pietrobon, Prado, & Caetano, 2008). Monitoring the performance of cooperatives is mandatory to ensure their sustainability. However, besides the economic-financial indicators, it is also necessary to monitor the social performance, that is, the relationships with members to meet their needs, providing participation, benefits, work, and income. According to Pinho, Amodeo and Milagres (2013), social management and business management are complementary and indispensable for the success of cooperative management. From this perspective, social management has the function of articulating the participation of the cooperative members in the decisions made by the cooperative, while business management is more focused on managing economic interests. This research aimed to discuss the social dimension and to identify social performance indicators in health cooperatives. The relevance of the theme is corroborated by the need for cooperatives to monitor their social performance in addition to strengthening the relationship with their members and strengthening their perpetuity. This research was exploratory with a qualitative approach. Primary data from interviews with cooperative managers and secondary data from internal document sources were used. These data were subsequently analyzed using the content and document analysis technique. Twenty-three indicators were identified covering financial aspects, personal and professional training through cooperative education, as well as encouraging the participation and engagement of cooperative members. The main managerial implications of the results indicated the need to implement a monitoring structure so that the indicators of the cooperative's actions towards its members can have the same importance as the monitoring of the economic-financial indicators.

Keywords: Cooperativism. Health Cooperative. Social performance indicators.

Theme: 5-Cooperatives, social innovation and civic wealth creation

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Agricultural Cooperative and member's Resilience of Kita and Yanfolila Cercles in Mali.

Presented by: Mumararungu, Innocent

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Mali derives 50% of its gross domestic product from the agricultural sector and 75% of the population lives in rural areas (Andrieu et al., 2017). The largely rural population engages in subsistence farming and in most cases groups together in cooperatives. Agricultural cooperatives achieve social cohesion, gender equality, and resilience of their members by promoting peacebuilding through community work. They use a variety of peacebuilding strategies, such as working together to build new schools and houses, resolving land inheritance and consolidation issues, forming clubs, and encouraging visits to each other's households to build a common understanding among members (Gisaro et al., 2019). Social cohesion and economic development within societies are key success factors for the sustainable resilience of their members. However, societies in some parts of the world are under particular pressure to maintain social cohesion and resilience. This is a major problem in Mali, often due to the long-term political and inter-ethnic conflicts the country has suffered since its independence. Despite Mali's conflict-related fragility, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated this vulnerability. This paper aims to examine the impact of agricultural cooperatives on social cohesion, and in particular on the resilience of members. Beyond member satisfaction, it is necessary to measure the contribution of cooperatives to peacebuilding and their impact in responding to crises, including the conflicts Mali is facing, and how agriculture cooperatives promoted resilience among members. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected from 56 members and 24 non-members purposively selected using a survey questionnaire. Descriptive and comparative methods were employed. The descriptive approach was used to provide a physical, human, social and economic framework for the areas and agricultural cooperatives studied. The comparative approach helped to understand the factors influencing the resilience and social cohesion of the agricultural cooperative's members and their households. A comparative analysis of changes for members and non-members was carried out by evaluating the socio-economic benefits that agricultural cooperatives provide to producers before and after joining the cooperatives. The results showed the contribution of agricultural cooperatives to peacebuilding initiatives and their role in promoting social cohesion and economic development among members compared to non-members. Moreover, agricultural cooperatives have managed to cope with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic by providing mutual assistance to those affected among cooperative members. They increased members' household incomes and, where cooperatives are the backbone of the household economy, increased members' resilience (Birshall et al., 2009).

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An encounter with invented cooperative identity – the case of agricultural cooperatives in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam

Presented by: Nguyen-Hoang, My-Phuong

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Organisations: Independent Researcher, Vietnam

Background

From 1945 to 1955, the cooperative movement was formed and developed in many free zones and revolutionary bases with simple forms of cooperation such as groups of labor exchange. On March 8, 1948, in Viet Bac War Zone, Democratic Glass Cooperative was established, opening the birth and development of the cooperative movement in Vietnam.

From 1955 to 1961, in 1960, more than 50,000 cooperatives were established in the whole country in the following industries and fields: agriculture, handicrafts, commerce, fishery, credit, etc., attracting a great majority of farmers, individual economic households, and workers.

From 1961 to 1965, the cooperative movement continued to be promoted. Along with the implementation of the campaign to improve the capacity of cooperatives with an expanded scale in the agricultural field, thousands of cooperatives in the non-agricultural fields were established, attracting millions of members.

From 1965 to 1975, cooperatives were consolidated, developed, and became an important economic force in the economy of the North. By the end of 1974, the whole North had more than 46,000 cooperatives in various sectors and fields. The cooperatives have encouraged the selfless work of the cooperative members, both in production and fighting.

From 1975-1997, in 1986, the year considered the highest development period of the cooperative movement, the whole country had 76,000 cooperatives in various economic sectors and fields, attracting more than 20 million members.

Since 1997, implementing the Party's renovation policy, cooperatives have had important changes. Since the first Law on Cooperatives was passed by the National Assembly at the end of 1996, took effect from January 1, 1997, until the 2003 and 2012 Law on Cooperatives and now the Law on Cooperatives 2023, created a more favorable legal framework for the cooperative sector to further develop.

Up to now, the whole country has 94 unions of agricultural cooperatives and nearly 21,000 agricultural cooperatives; of which about 65% are rated as good. It can be affirmed that the collective economy plays a very important role in the restructuring of the agricultural sector and in the implementation of the Strategy for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development for the period of 2021 - 2030, with a vision to 2050 according to the Decision of the Prime Minister.

Aims

The paper aims to present a “thick description” of cooperative identity, in other words, the institutional organization and cultural structure of agricultural cooperatives in Vietnam as a local phenomenon influenced by the development of the economy and culture at national and global levels.

Methods

Qualitative research with the approach of Neo-Weberian economic anthropology using in-depth interviews and participatory observations.

Interviewees consist of members, board of directors, managers, auditors of agricultural cooperatives as well as local government officials in 13 provinces of the Mekong Delta in Vietnam; lecturers on agricultural cooperatives; policymakers; and NGOs.

Research questions:

How has the “definition” of agricultural cooperatives been invented and reinvented during the history of the development of agricultural cooperatives in Vietnam?

What are the organizational and institutional conditions for governance innovations to arise and be established?

How do governance innovations question the statement on cooperative identity?

How do the cooperative movement and traditional cooperatives make sense of new forms of cooperativism, in particular regarding the cooperative identity statement and governance?

The paper uses the triangulation method with many other data resources like documentaries, government policies, poetry, etc. even the author herself.

Results and discussion

With the change of invented and re-invented identity of agricultural cooperatives in the Mekong Delta (Vietnam), the corresponding cooperative governance will be differently innovated over time - from the “old style” of bureaucracy and government-controlled to the “new style” of a market-oriented and self-governing community.

In public discourse and practice, each stakeholder (cooperatives, policymakers, consultants, etc.) tries to negotiate the “identity” and “governance” of agricultural cooperatives and find ways to influence each other under the institutional and political direction of the Party’s Central Resolution.

There is no right or wrong about the cooperative definition and governance innovation in this picture of Vietnam but the article wants to show the very Vietnamese color of agricultural cooperatives.

Contributions and implications

The article aims to contribute a perspective of a person who used to have an aversion to cooperatives - representing “obsolete” in the “modern economy”, then she has encountered cooperatives after 5 years of working with and consulting on, and now stands outside the “system” to compare and contrast the “identity” of the Vietnam agricultural cooperatives with the “model” of cooperatives of the world. Moreover, the author also encounters different cultures when interacting with “ideal types” (Weber) of cooperatives when participating in an online course with other cooperative practitioners around the world. At this time, the researcher is to act as a tool in the methodology.

The researcher herself tries to remain politically neutral and describes the ideas and values of the powerful and the powerless in the most subtle and subtle way possible – considering actors' views and opinions seriously and treating their values and norms with respect rather than contempt.

However, the article does not assess the effectiveness of each type of cooperative governance in the Mekong Delta (Vietnam) during its historical development; therefore, further quantitative research is needed.

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Uncorked: detecting cooperators' sentiment in challenging times

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Background

This paper looks at the challenges faced by Italian wine cooperatives in the wine sector. Over the period 1950–2020, cooperatives went from 1/20 of national wine production to 3/5 of the market (Fernández & Simpson, 2017). However, cooperatives struggle against larger internationally operating wineries due to global competition in the entry-level and mid-range segments (Anderson, 2004). To stay competitive, cooperatives need to differentiate themselves by improving product quality, reducing costs, and a better marketing of their product (Richter & Hanf, 2021). Per capita wine consumption has declined in favor of a higher demand for quality and authentic wine experiences, affecting the business environment (Chiapparino & Morettin, 2018).

Aim

This paper delves into the daunting challenges faced by cooperative leaders and shines a light on the effective strategies they use to bolster resilience and surmount obstacles.

Methods

Our methodology is qualitative and based on data analysis and information retrieval techniques through semi-structured interviews with 15 wine cooperatives in Italian northern-eastern regions and with 10 wine sector experts. We transformed the data into a tag cloud for easy analysis and applied natural language processing (NLP) techniques for sentiment analysis and text classification, which provide a quick overview of text data patterns, trends, topics and identify patterns (Sinclair & Cardew-Hall, 2008 & Nord, 2005).

Results and discussion

The preliminary analysis conducted using the above-mentioned methodology highlights four key challenges faced by cooperatives in the wine sector: intense competition, lack of democratic decision-making, difficulties in retaining members, and ineffective governance and management practices. These preliminary findings are in line with the literature on cooperatives intensive competition (Bisson et al., 2002 & Berbegal et al., 2019), degeneration of decision-making processes and alienation of members (Österberg & Nilsson, 2009), changes in consumers' preferences (Allemand et al., 2023), and difficulties in expanding self-reliance, sustainability (Moon & Lee, 2020) and collective-choice arrangements (Guttman, 2021). Business leaders and experts who were interviewed recognize the benefits of the cooperative business model. The textual analysis emphasizes the impact of such cooperation model on resilience, negotiating strength, better market access, and higher price premiums. The results are in line with the literature on cooperatives' increased bargaining power (Richter & Hanf, 2020), improved price premiums (Nazzaro et al., 2022 &

Schamel, 2014), and capacity to respond quickly to changes in market conditions and consumer preferences (Iliopoulos & Hendrikse, 2009). Eventually, the analysis shows that the successful co-op cases examined allowed for a more democratic decision-making process and improved governance and management practices, ensuring the long-term success and sustainability of the cooperative.

Contribution and implications

This paper explores challenges facing Italian wine cooperatives engaged in the global market and provides some valuable insights for policymakers, experts, and cooperative wineries to improve competitiveness through improved product quality, reduced costs, and increased marketing. The study uses a combination of word clouds and text analysis for data analysis and information retrieval, offering a useful tool for future studies. Indeed, it emerges that, to ensure the success of cooperatives, it is important to support and promote cooperatives growth and development through research into best practices for governance and management and policy making aimed at promoting their interests in the wine sector. The current challenges of cooperatives in the wine sector are a complex set of issues that require a multi-pronged approach to address them. By understanding the challenges and advantages of some good practices, the wine industry can work towards promoting and benefitting from the success of this important organizational model.

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Are cooperatives doomed to produce only low quality wines? Not quite...

Presented by: Nizza, Umberto

Authors: Zago, Angelo (1); Gastaldello, Giulia (2); Nizza, Umberto (1); Schamel, Guenter (2)

Organisations: 1: University of Verona, Italy; 2: University of Bozen, Italy

Background

Historically, many cooperatives were formed 'out-of-necessity', e.g., to gain bargaining power, to solve market failures, etc. in difficult times (many in the interwar period, few others decades earlier). Over time, the success of Cooperative organizations (co-ops) has been mixed. While their resilience in difficult times is reassuring (see, e.g., the last report on the UK at <https://www.uk.coop/resources/co-op-economy-report-2021>), in other dimensions co-ops are not doing so well. For instance, co-ops in the wine sector tend to be less internationalized and with a weaker reputation for product quality than their private counterparts (see, e.g., Frick, 2004; Schamel, 2015; Veseth, 2021). Indeed, the 379 Italian wine co-ops cover 58% of wine production but only 40% of value (turnover), implying that the unit value of the wine they produce is well below that of IOF. These lackluster performances are confirmed also by the fact that co-ops cover only 52% of PDO but 65% of PGI production. Moreover, the total wine exported by co-ops is only a third of total wine export (<https://vivite.it/argomenti/vinitaly/cs-vinitaly22/>).

However, while the aggregate performance may appear below average, there are few instances in which co-ops have shown great performances and success in terms of quality, export orientation, and economic satisfaction for members. In other words, while on the aggregate co-ops may underperform compared to IOF, there is sizable heterogeneity among co-ops themselves and successful cases are well known (see, e.g., Russo, 2019, and <https://vivite.it/argomenti/vinitaly/cs-vinitaly22/>). In some cases, wine co-ops seem to perform even better than IOF and reach extremely high levels of product quality (see, e.g., Mullen, T., The Luxury Wine Cooperatives of Northern Italy, Forbes, 2022).

Starting from these overall performances and heterogeneity, in this study we investigate whether the co-operative form and its principles (beginning with the Rochdale's and up to ICA's (2022) principles) can still serve its purpose and create value for members. Value creation can be translated into efficiency in seizing market opportunities, likely to be a crucial opportunity to create value for members given the evolution of food markets (e.g., by increasing the co-op market share and increasing member's financial gains in terms of grapes payment; see, e.g., Aiassa et al., 2018), and/or providing useful services at cost to members[1]. Market opportunities, can be represented by reaching new markets (e.g., foreign markets), implementing new distributions channels (e.g., e-commerce), increasing product value by finding new uses or selling formats (e.g., bottling vs bulk), and so on. Instead, services to members include, for instance, technical support, innovation diffusion, and so on.

Aims

How can co-ops create value for their members? Our interest is in investigating when and how well cooperatives can seize value creation opportunities for members, tackling the challenges that co-ops are facing and individuating possible feasible solutions and best practices. The objective of this study in particular is to understand whether and to what extent the different payment methods used to remunerate members' grapes are related to the co-ops performances, taking into account quality schemes as well. Structural information on the co-op, like number of members and hectares, balance sheets data, etc. are also taken into account.

Methods

Our methodology is qualitative and based on semi-structured in-depth interviews with 15 wine cooperatives located in the Alto-Adige, Trentino and Veneto Italian regions. These interviews were recorded and transcribed. The co-ops in the sample have different production orientation, size and strategies. We take the grapes payment systems as a reference, since it is a widely recognized indicator in the wine co-ops literature (see, e.g., Aiassa et al., 2018; Hanf and Schweickert, 2014; Fares and Orozco, 2014). The present analysis is a first exploratory step, for a subsequent study on a larger Italian sample. Indeed, results of the preliminary qualitative analysis will guide a national survey extended to management and governance practices of Italian wine cooperatives.

The scale development relies on an economic approach. Indeed, data collection, measurement and score assignment are all based on relevant (economic and/or organizational) theory. For instance, if quality in procurement from members is deemed important (this may be so if a co-op pursues a quality-driven business model) and to the extent that remunerating quality commodities (e.g., grapes, milk, etc.) is considered efficient and effective, a co-op using quality-based remuneration schemes for members should obtain an higher score than a co-op not using them.

Preliminary results and discussion

We observe that more powerful quality incentives are associated with better performing cooperatives in terms of quality obtained (proxied by prizes and scores obtained by wine experts, i.e., wine guides) and average selling prices for bottled wines. Moreover, these same cooperatives are in healthier financial conditions and make significantly more investments than other comparable wine co-ops. The results of this exploratory study will allow to apply and adapt the developed scale to measure other different managerial and governance dimensions in order to identify organizational areas prone to possible improvements, and provide interested cooperatives and/or their associations with policy advice.

Contribution and implications

This exploratory study captures heterogeneity in wine co-ops grapes payment schemes, in particular regarding their quality. This exploratory benchmarking exercise will serve to develop an initial merit scale for classifying wine co-ops along different performance dimensions. Results of this preliminary analysis will guide a national survey extended to management and governance practices of Italian (wine) cooperatives in order to identify organizational areas prone to possible improvements and provide policy advice to interested cooperatives, their associations and/or policy-makers.

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[1] One of the best descriptions of how a co-op can provide value to members is probably that offered in Aiassa et al. (2018), where the management at Domane Wachau states: "A cooperative can succeed as long as it over performs and it pays higher grape prices compared to the rest of the

market. Only that way a cooperative can expect solidarity from its member growers and the management to implement higher-quality criteria in the vineyard" (p. 248).

Humanistic governance in financial cooperatives

Presented by: Novkovic, Sonja

Authors: Novkovic, Sonja (1); McMahon, Cian (1); Carabini, Camilla (2)

Organisations: 1: International Centre for Co-operative Management, Canada; 2: University of Milano - Bicocca

This paper provides a humanistic theoretical perspective on the potential for financial cooperatives to broaden their governance beyond the standard “outsider” consumer membership. Given the contemporary prominence of debates on the future of work, the green transition, and green finance in particular, financial co-ops may benefit from confronting these challenges through the incorporation of “insider” worker/staff and additional outsider (e.g. supplier, community) stakeholders, via an inclusive multistakeholder governance regime. The increased information/knowledge flow and checks and balances via network governance bodies involving multiple stakeholders can thereby enhance social and socio-ecological innovation. This helps to avoid corporate isomorphism and the resulting mission drift away from alignment with the cooperative identity.

The potential benefits of multistakeholder governance in financial cooperatives is illustrated through three case study examples: firstly, OAS Financial Credit Union based out of Washington, DC in the USA; secondly, the Cooperative for Ethical Finance (ZEF) based in Croatia; and thirdly, Banca Etica based out of Italy. Semi-structured interviews are carried out with governance experts in each of these cooperatives, followed by a multiple cross-case analysis accounting for the varying national/cultural contexts. Results are presented and analyzed within the governance system framework of organizational structures, participatory decision-making processes, and change management dynamics. All three examples, in different configurations, display innovations in governance, the inclusion of multiple stakeholders, and a related orientation towards sustainability and revitalization of the cooperative identity.

Book Launch: Humanistic Governance in Democratic Organizations: The Cooperative Difference

Presented by: Novkovic, Sonja

Authors: Novkovic, Sonja; McMahon, Cian

Organisations: International Centre for Co-operative Management, Canada

This panel session will outline the main contributions of an edited book volume on humanistic (people-centred, participatory-democratic) cooperative governance. The book covers all main types of cooperative – producer, consumer, worker, multistakeholder, secondary – in both theory and practice. It also engages and critically extends humanistic economics and management approaches more generally, with implications for the broader field of democratic organization. Key to the perspectives and experiences outlined throughout is that ongoing member and stakeholder participation in a cooperative's democratic governance system can result in a deeper form of social innovation at the enterprise level. The meaningful involvement of multiple stakeholders in governance structures, processes, and dynamics allows for mutually informed and negotiated decisions under increasingly prevalent conditions of uncertainty and complexity. Social innovations are thus co-produced through the collective intelligence of co-op members and stakeholders.

The session's time will be divided equally between: 1) an overview of the ICCM's theoretical and conceptual framing; 2) the presentation of case studies from selected book chapters by contributing authors who are international experts in their topic areas; and 3) Q&A/discussion with conference participants. The book will be published Open Access and the link made available to attendees.

Effect of measures instituted by SACCOs in response to Covid-19 on member engagement

Presented by: Nyamongo, Isaac K.

Authors: Nyamongo, Isaac K.; Waweru, Kennedy M.; Wambu, Charles K.; Kiganane, Lucy; Oboka, Wycliffe; Mutua, Lydia

Organisations: The Cooperative University of Kenya, Kenya

Background

Covid-19 pandemic exerted significant pressure on the Kenyan cooperative sector through its impact on the financial sector (World Bank, 2020). While the impact has been felt across all the sectors in Kenya, especially due to cessation of air travel, the pandemic had profound impact on Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations (SACCOs) in aviation, hospitality and horticulture, resulting in massive layoffs and/or loss of income. A policy brief by UNDP (2020) revealed that the contagious nature of the virus necessitated restriction on financial institutions which almost paralyzed savings and credit activities.

Aims

We investigate how measures instituted by government and implemented by SACCOs supported cooperatives in aviation, hospitality, and horticulture sectors to continue operations.

Methods

A mixed methods approach was used to generate quantitative and qualitative data to provide insights into resilience, which we conceptualized as capacity to resist, cope with and recover from Covid-19 induced shocks. A sample size of 15 SACCOs (horticulture – 7, hospitality – 6, and aviation – 2) constituting about 25% of the accessible population of 59 SACCOs in the three sectors was used. From the 15 SACCOs, 545 members were selected from member lists ensuring proportionate representation. Qualitative data was generated through 8 focus group discussions (FGDs) with SACCO members (aviation – 1 FGD, hospitality – 3 FGDs and horticulture – 4 FGDs), 11 in-depth interviews (IDIs) with SACCO CEOs and 37 key informant interviews (KIIs) with Chairmen of Executive and Supervisory Committees, and County Director of Cooperatives.

Results and Discussion

The key findings are presented below:

First, Covid-19 impacted performance in operations, service delivery, engagement with members, monthly SACCO contributions and loan repayment by members. Services were either slowed (61%) or social interactions restricted (56.8%). Similarly, service delivery was reduced (65.5%) and direct engagement with members reduced (61.7%) due to movement restrictions and social distancing protocols. Lastly, the financial transactions were impacted as monthly SACCO contributions took a hit (98.9%, either decreased or stopped contributions) leading to need for variation of loan repayments.

Second, the SACCOs introduced interventions to remain afloat and continue providing services. Respondents pointed out the following measures introduced: social distancing (78.3%), hand washing and sanitization (75.4%), use of digital/online platforms to minimize the need for face-to-face services (52.5%), rescheduling or renegotiations of loans (44.3%) and reducing number of employees (20.7%) since most of the operations have been digitized in order to reduce the cost of operations and the need for face-to-face meetings. These measures had both positive (e.g. ease with which members accessed SACCO services) and negative (e.g. challenges accessing services due to technology limitations) effects on members and SACCO operations as highlighted by 74.3% of the participants.

Third, about nine in ten (90.4%) of the respondents reported decline in performance at interview time. However, respondents remained hopeful following the interventions put in place by government and executed by the SACCOs as they expected an improvement in economic performance over the following six months (48.5%) or 12 months (58.3%).

Fourth, the measures that were instituted had various effects on member engagement. The transfer of services to online platforms enabled continuity of service delivery when physical face-to-face engagements could only allow service to a handful for members per day. It also afforded SACCOs the benefit of acceleration of adoption of technology by members. The acceleration of digitization of services has been documented elsewhere (e.g. Rodríguez & Oconitrillo (n.d.) linking it to a trend that is likely to lead to digital transformation in the credit unions. The transfer of service traffic to online platforms likely came with risks (e.g. some members who are not tech-savvy being locked out of services) that SACCOs should mitigate. Similar findings have been reported elsewhere (McKillop & French (2020). To address this risk, Price & Monford (n.d.) note that the sudden shift to online platforms places tremendous pressure on IT services over extended periods and recommend that SACCOs ensure that platforms are robust enough to handle higher traffic and take steps to safeguard information security through enhanced cyber-surveillance. This view is shared by McKillop & French (2020) and Rodríguez & Oconitrillo (n.d.) who recommend regulatory flexibility to allow credit unions to adopt to the evolving scenario and adapt their operations to assist with the pandemic, and cope with increased institutional stress.

Conclusion

The toll of the Covid-19 pandemic on SACCOs has caused adoption of new forms of business, which have enabled them to navigate the harsh economic times occasioned by the outbreak. This has positive effects on efficiencies in terms of cost and time for both the SACCO and members and acceleration of adoption of technology by members. It also opens newer avenues for product innovation by leveraging on AI opportunities presented by digitization.

Secondly, loan restructuring/moratoriums or suspension of payment of loan principal for a period while impacting negatively on SACCO revenues had the effect of enabling members navigate difficult job losses or reduced incomes. While this is positive, it has the potential to lead to loan portfolio management and possibly capitalization challenges SACCOs.

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COOPERATIVE RESILIENCE – WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM COVID 19?

Presented by: Ogilvie, Judith Hermanson

Authors: Ogilvie, Judith Hermanson; Fitzgerald, Meghan; Hung, Nicholas

Organisations: Overseas Cooperative Development Council, United States of America

BACKGROUND: During the COVID 19 pandemic it became empirically clear to practitioners and policymakers alike that the resilience of cooperatives was being challenged. This study was undertaken to identify the major challenges faced by cooperatives in six countries in sub-Saharan Africa during COVID-19, as well as to understand the strategies and strengths employed by cooperatives to mitigate adversities. The study focus was rural cooperatives working in various agricultural sectors using a baseline of cooperative performance measures had been established pre-COVID.

AIMS: The aim of the paper is to present a nuanced view of the evidence about cooperative resilience in this sample of cooperatives by looking at pre and post Covid data. It discusses the impacts of the pandemic on the cooperatives and explores the nature of cooperative resilience demonstrated during the pandemic and some implications for the cooperative business model. The paper also describes means by which cooperative resilience may be enhanced through external and internal actions.

METHODS: Resilience in this study is defined as a cooperative's ability to withstand extreme external shocks in terms of business performance, measured by the business-membership ratio (BMR), which was the key indicator in the previous research. (BMR represents the annual revenue generated per member by a cooperative over the previous 12 months)

The paper is based on data derived from a mixed methods study drawing upon quantitative survey data and qualitative focus group discussion data probing survey outcomes carried out in 2021. The sample included cooperatives from five sub-Saharan countries, including Uganda, Malawi, Madagascar, Rwanda, and Kenya. This COVID 19 research drew also upon the baseline of data gathered in person during action research conducted prior to the pandemic 2016-2019 (Francesconi et. al. 2021) with cooperative leaders in each of the countries.

The current study findings were derived by comparing previous data from cooperative leaders who participated in the action research with new data that was collected from them in 2021. In 2021, cooperative leaders were surveyed in one-to one virtual meetings using standard questionnaires with similar questions as those used previously. The 2021 survey also included additional COVID 19 related questions regarding challenges faced and strategies used during COVID-19. Data collected was via a purposive sample derived from the same cooperative leaders as had participated in the earlier action research.

For purposes of this study, those cooperatives that saw an increase, or no change in BMR from pre-COVID-19 to 2021 were assigned to the business resilient (BR) group. Those cooperatives that saw a decrease in BMR were assigned to the non-business resilient (NBR) group.

Descriptive methods comparing frequencies and proportions between pre-COVID-19 and 2021, as well as BR and NBR cooperatives, were utilized, revealing meaningful differences between these groups across various variables.

Further, qualitative data obtained from focus groups was analyzed using open coding for themes and patterns and assisted in the interpretation of quantitative findings. Focus groups were formed from a sample of the those surveyed.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION:

Analysis of the data has shown a mixed pattern of resilience and points the way for greater preparedness and resilience. The outcomes from this research indicated that, as compared with previous data, 53% saw an increase in BMR and 47% saw a decrease. All cooperatives experienced at least a 5% change in BMR – either upwards or the opposite.

The reasons for the increase or decrease in BMR are shown to lie within external environments and policy framework in which cooperatives must function in any given country, as well as within the internal operations and policies of the cooperatives. The study also found that there was an upsurge in membership in cooperatives during this time, with NBR cooperatives experiencing greater levels. A small majority of BR cooperatives were able to outperform pre-COVID situations and absorb additional membership, remain responsive to members in the changed COVID circumstances, while other BR cooperatives were not. A common characteristic among NBR cooperatives was a significant uptick in membership and an expansion of services. The data suggest a tension between certain aspects of the cooperative business model and resilience for both groups. More specifically, the study shows some differing patterns of responsiveness to members and MBR outcomes.

While we found that only approximately one half of the sample were business resilient during COVID 19, the findings suggest that cooperatives demonstrated other forms of resilience yet to be explored and operationalized in cooperative resilience research. One conclusion that may be drawn is that MBR is by itself an insufficient measure of cooperative resilience.

CONTRIBUTIONS and IMPLICATIONS: This study shows the complexity of cooperative resilience in response to external shock. It identifies specific internal and external challenges faced and differing outcomes with respect to resilience. The data illuminates suggested steps for cooperatives to strengthen internal resilience and those that can be taken within the enabling environment. The external challenges will contribute to a nuanced discussion at the international, country and cooperative leaders with the potential of bringing about policy and practice adjustments that will strengthen cooperatives resilience. The dialogue about both internal and external challenges, together with opportunities for additional research, should contribute to a greater awareness of the nature of cooperative resilience during times of external shock, including the operational choices and trade-offs that must be made, and new approaches to cooperative training and preparedness.

Characterising governance, innovations and sustainability in the French wine industry: a comparison between Cooperatives and Investor Owned Firms

Presented by: PAVEZ, Iciar

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Organisations: 1: MoISA, Univ Montpellier, CIHEAM-IAMM, CIRAD, INRAE, Institut Agro, IRD, Montpellier, France; 2: MoISA, Univ Montpellier, CIHEAM-IAMM, CIRAD, INRAE, Institut Agro, IRD, Montpellier, France; 3: MoISA, Univ Montpellier, CIHEAM-IAMM, CIRAD, INRAE, Institut A

Background

Facing the climate change and the need for more environmentally friendly practices all along the value chain, wine industry is in a period of transition, characterized by new form of innovations in order to be more sustainable. In this context, several sustainability initiatives have been launched in the French wine sector to comply with sustainability requirements, whether at the firm or at the chain level (Pavez et al., 2022). These initiatives are strongly anchored in innovation that have been adopted namely by wine co-ops, representing 40% of the whole wine production, seeking for competitive advantages and the fulfillment of social responsibility.

However, managerial decisions for sustainability can be influenced by the type of governance, i.e. Cooperatives and Investor Owned Firms (IOF). Cooperatives, as social economy organizations, play a central role in achieving sustainability. However, contrary to the IOF, cooperatives face a dilemma between their solidarity principles and the competitive and capitalistic needs (Draperi & Le Corroller, 2016). Previous studies showed that beyond governance, size, networking and environmental factors are key performance and innovation drivers (Basterretxea & Martínez, 2012)

In our study, we applied a multi-paradigmatic theoretical perspective. We considered the governance structures of the wine chain following Ménard (2018) and Pavez et al. (2022). We also analyzed firm governance thanks to the transaction cost economics and the cognitive theory of the firm (Saisset & Codron, 2019). Moreover, we based our research on the OECD's concept of innovation (2018). Sustainability was based on Brundtland report (1987) dealing with its 3 dimensions (economic, social, environmental) and sustainability performance was based on Elkington (1998) and Marcis et al. (2019).

Aims

Our objective is to understand how the characteristics of wine cooperatives and wine investor owned firms (IOF), as well as their forms of governance, can influence innovation orientation and sustainability performance. In other words, we wonder at what extent different ways of governance (co-op/IOF) can lead to different types of innovations and sustainability approaches.

Methods

Our methodology is qualitative and based on semi-structured interviews with wine estates, wine cooperatives and wine merchants. We studied 16 firms, located in Occitanie, Provence and Alsace. The 22 interviews to managers and presidents were quasi totally recorded and transcribed. These firms had different governance mechanisms, production orientation, size and commercial strategies. We established the differentiating factors, based on the firm characteristics, to elaborate a typology. Then, a thematic analysis was applied following the step-by-step approach proposed by Nowell et al. (2017), allowing an auditable trace of coding, interpretation and representation of textual data.

Results and discussion

Our results show that innovations for sustainability are not only determined by the legal form but also by their business model, such as cooperatives innovating in their governance by benchmarking leading capitalistic firms.

Process-related innovations were the most frequent and mainly concerned packaging, mostly oriented to recycling improvements (i.e. bottle deposit system), as well as vineyard (new agro-ecological practices), and irrigation from wastewater treatment plants. They were followed by organizational innovations, often related to governance (e.g. stakeholder committees and governing boards, horizontal and vertical alliances). Commercial (e.g. online sales, brands and labelling) and process innovations (e.g. extraction of local yeasts, new niche wines) were more numerous in the biggest and more decentralized firms (of which some wine co-ops). Upstream oriented firms developed significant governance innovations towards their stakeholders. Standards seemed to be the most widespread means to signal sustainability, especially for some IOF with numerous vineyards, developing direct exports. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)-oriented firms were prone to measure sustainability performance. Firms also implemented more flexible voluntary commitment strategies.

Only a little part of the declared innovations can be considered as complete sustainability ones, whereas almost 50% were just economic centered. This situation was very contrasted thanks to CSR, but not systematically linked to a type of firm.

Professionals pointed out that Protected Denominations of Origin could hinder innovation, namely concerning new resistant varieties and new oenological practices. They didn't appear either as sustainability-oriented. However, Protected Geographical Indications seemed more flexible to innovate, mainly because it allows for greater flexibility in the use of new varieties and blends to diversify the commercial strategy towards new markets.

Contributions and implications

This study underlined the great diversity of the wine firms in terms of types of innovations and sustainability orientation. It provides an insight and understanding of the main concerns and efforts undertaken by wine firms to meet competitiveness and sustainability challenges, such as water management, pesticide use reduction, development of organic and biodynamic viticulture, internal and external social initiatives. Also, it allowed us to design a typology of wine firms based on their governance characteristics and strategies.

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Being stagiaire in Belgian WISEs: How the first-line personnel could influence the impact of socioeconomic inclusion programmes of social economy.

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Background: Social economy (SE) is considered an alternative solution to cope with social and societal challenges, namely unemployment, limited access to education, severe poverty, migration, and loss of social benefits resulting in social exclusion, especially for vulnerable population groups. Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISEs), mainly social enterprises and social cooperatives develop professional/work-integration initiatives, addressing people who face exclusion in the labor market (ENSIE, n.d.). The social impact generated in the context of WISEs for their members is in line with their principles of democracy, equity and solidarity, social responsibility, and equality (Hazenbergh & Paterson-Young, 2022; Kurimoto et al., 2015), while the drive for efficiency, the family-type environment, and the strong sense of identity and belonging are also present, along with the clear economic sustainability rationale (Roelants, Hyungsik & Terrasi, 2014). A lot of different methodological frameworks have been used to assess and measure the impact of SE organizations on their members and the communities where they operate. This big number of tools and metrics confirms the difficulties deriving from the complexity of measuring the economic and social results (Richez-Battesti & Bidet, 2021). Regardless of the progress that has been observed in this field, there is still no commonly accepted approach, and the existing methodologies are considered poorly suited to the SE context. SE organization representatives are responding with a call for more bottom-up approaches. Powerful, unified, and bottom-up voice that advocates the importance of proof of impact supports the transformative role of SE organizations (Buckland & Hehenberger, 2021). What is more, previous relevant research attempts have been focused on the opinions of management and members\participants, rather than the perceptions of first-line personnel of WISEs, the people who deliver the services and influence significantly the outcome of an intervention.

Aims: This study aims to reveal the importance of the role of the first-line personnel regarding the assessment and measurement of the social and sustainable impact of socioeconomic inclusion programmes and initiatives, delivered by WISEs (social cooperatives and enterprises). Moreover, this study could serve as the basis for the development of more bottom-up evaluation approaches to the impact generated, considering the dynamics that exist inside the organizations, in the process of tackling major social and societal challenges for their participants and their members.

Methods: The aims of this study are approached by the methodology of observant participation. This refers to the on-the-spot observation of the researcher, engaging in all activities of a programme (Seim, 2021), in the same way as the stagiaires. This qualitative methodological approach enabled the researcher to have first-hand experience of the day-to-day life of a stagiaire, observing the role

of first-line personnel and its influence on the programme participants. The observant participation was performed in Wallonia, Belgium. The researcher enrolled in groups of socioeconomic inclusion programmes as a stagiaire. The researcher followed 14 different teams, in three organizations that deliver socioeconomic inclusion programmes in seven different professions. The observation was undergone for four weeks during the last trimester of 2022 in different skill development teams under 20 different instructors/trainers/social workers. Through this process, it was revealed to the researcher the context and the principles under which the programmes were developed and delivered, as well as the different roles that the first-line personnel play on a daily basis, to achieve the result of both skills development and inclusion. The data was gathered in a self-reflective written diary by the researcher on a daily basis, mentioning the context, the dynamics, the communications, and the emotions, mostly reflecting upon the role of the trainer.

Results and Discussion: The analysis of the researcher's diary revealed similarities in the principles of different skills-development programmes and among the approaches that the personnel use to support the stagiaires in becoming competent and independent professionals. Moreover, by observing the way in which the stagiaires work, communicate, and cooperate with each other it became possible to understand the social impact contribution of first-line personnel. This was a very important finding, as previous research had already focused on the social impact of systems, programmes, and organisations (e.g. Hervieux & Voltan, 2019), but really few had assessed the influence of first-line personnel on inclusion programmes' participants (e.g. Lall, 2019).

Contributions and implications: The analysis of the observant participation results revealed the importance of the role of first-line personnel during the stage of the delivery of the socioeconomic inclusion programme, in the context of the social economy. Instructors/trainers/social workers are key players, not only in the process of skills development but also in transferring the very principles that the organisations of the social economy environment (social cooperatives, enterprises etc.) are based on, having maybe the most important contribution to the overall social impact. The results of this study enabled the researcher to develop a new approach regarding research tools (interview guides, surveys) that could efficiently address the issue of social and sustainable impact evaluation and measurement, from a bottom-up perspective.

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Inter-co-operation among co-operatives: the case of a meta-organization as tool to foster innovative solutions to societal challenges

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BACKGROUND

The nature of social and environmental challenges such as poverty, inequality and environmental degradation 'are seen as highlighting the failure of conventional solutions and established paradigm across all three sectors of society: private sector market failure; public sector, siloed thinking; a lack of scale in, and fragmentation across, civil society (Nicholls and Murdoch, 2012).

The main aim of this paper is to analyse how cooperatives, collaborating among them (principle 6) can implement innovative solutions, characterised by an economic, social and environmental positive impact. Exploring the case of a meta-organisation, which coordinate this cooperation, we will explore which are the tools and instruments that support these innovative processes

New solutions to social challenges that have the intent and effect of equality, justice and empowerment is generally defined as social innovation (Anderson et al.,2014). From an organisational point of view, this concept is interesting as it searches for an additional solution that goes beyond the conventional solution of the public-private paradigm and needs to consider the interconnection between different entities – individuals or organisations. Tracey & Stott (2017) have recently framed three processes of social innovation in the following way social entrepreneurship, social intrapreneurship and social extrapreneurship. On the one hand literature extensively focused on social entrepreneurship (Dacin, Dacin, & Tracey, 2011), while there is still a lot to debate around the latter two terms. Among them, social extrapreneurship seems to be the least explored.

Algoso (2015) studied the rise of a different sort of extrapreneur in the international development sector. Extrapreneurship is a partnership approach that goes beyond co-ordination or co-branding. It starts with the network and leverages [resources]... to create a disproportionately greater development impact.' Reframed in the context of social innovation, social extrapreneurship captures the process of inter-organizational action that facilitates alternative combinations of ideas, people, places and resources to address social challenges and make social change. Theoretically, it could be conceptualized as a form of institutional entrepreneurship (Tracey, Phillips, & Jarvis, 2011), extra-institutional entrepreneurship (King & Soule, 2007), or institutional work (Lawrence & Dover, 2015).

This cooperation among actors creates new solutions through collaboration between organizations and networks. In the cooperative ecosystem, the concept of inter-cooperation and collaboration among cooperatives is not new and it has been raised as one of the principles that constitute the cooperative identity. Different forms of collaborations have emerged, and in time these interactions

are increasingly institutionalized. An example could be the national consortiums such as Consorzio Nazionale dei Servizi in Italy, a meta-organisation constituted of more than 170 Italian cooperatives.

Ahrne and Brunsson (2005, 2008) defined meta-organizations as formal organizations organizing other formal organizations. What has been called the 'European School' (Berkowitz & Bor, 2018) has emphasized the decided dimension of meta-organization: the existence of an umbrella collective with some degree of actorhood, featuring a distinctive level of at least some interconnected decision-making (see Grothe-Hammer et al., 2022).

Berkowitz et al. (2022) have recently worked in clarifying and emphasizing the main characteristics of meta-organizations, as well as their purposes and activities.

Among four main purposes (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008), meta-organisations deal with the identity and status of their members by enabling members to create a collective identity (Hedmo, 2012), or they handle common tasks that the members have outsourced to the meta-organization, not because they have to be done collectively, but because they can be more effectively handled by the meta-organization. These four purposes translate into four common and crucial activities in meta-organizations: (1) governance or comanagement activities, (2) advocacy activities, (3) boundary and category work, and (4) service provision (Berkowitz et al., 2022).

AIMS: RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This work aims at 1. starting from the concept of social extrapreneurship, understanding how collaboration among co-operatives can result in new solutions for the creation of civic wealth in order to answer to big challenges 2. How a meta organisation can foster the implementation of new solutions to societal issues, and which tools are put in place in order to highlight the co-operative identity of its members

METHODOLOGY

This research will consist of a literature review. The literature review will be performed on the main conceptual building blocks that constitute the research. First, it will focus on social innovation and social extrapreneurship. Secondly, it will look at the cooperatives identity and how they are intrinsically and historically connected with the tendency of intercooperation (Menzani & Zamagni, 2009), stressed also in principle 6 of the Cooperatives identity. Finally, it will explore the concept of meta-organisations and how they can be positioned compared to other forms of interaction between organisations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION, CONTRIBUTION AND IMPLICATIONS

This research holds relevance in understanding possible enablers for the cooperative ecosystem in implementing new solutions to solve global challenges. It aims at understanding how social extrapreneurship works among cooperatives and how meta-organisations position among other forms of interaction between organisations.

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Bringing democracy to life in cooperatives: ongoing experiments. The cases of Railcoop and SmartCoop

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Organisations: 1: SmartCoop, Belgium; 2: Railcoop, France

In Europe, SmartCoop (autonomous workers cooperative, Belgium, since 1998) and Railcoop (freight and passenger transport, France, since 2019) are two large cooperatives, with respectively 32,249 and 13,700 members. One of their current challenges? Ensuring the participation in democratic governance of their members in line with their political project and their economic development strategy.

At this stage, democratic governance in a social economy organization can be defined as a mode of governance by the members that is based on: the equality of voting members (regardless of their financial contribution), the accountability of governance bodies, and democratic rules and practices based on participation and transparency (Barthoulot and Fahmy, 2022). Member participation in democratic governance is a long-standing and recurring thorny issue in cooperatives, particularly those of large size, especially in terms of membership (Caire, 2010; Draperi, 2012). Several studies argue that large organizations may degenerate with the introduction of more hierarchical leadership and the pre-eminence of economic objectives (Meister, 1974). The difficulties of maintaining a dynamic democracy - with an effective participation of a majority of members in the construction and decision making - remain an important issue in large cooperatives, even in the digital age (video, chat, internal social networks in cooperatives). Although many articles have focused on this issue in cooperative banks in the 2010s, attesting to a trivialization (low member participation), they retain a democratic specificity - unequal - by their organizational form, practices and collective values of the membership (Gianfaldoni et al., 2012; Caire and Nivoix, 2012; Couret, 2014).

However, unlike emblematic groups such as Mondragon or Up! (ex-Chèque Déjeuner), which are workers' cooperatives, SmartCoop and Railcoop also have a heterogeneous membership: three categories for SmartCoop (service users, employees and legal entities), five categories for Railcoop (employees, natural persons, local authorities, technical and financial partners, other legal entities). These multi-member cooperatives face an additional difficulty, compared to single-member cooperatives (e.g. consumer cooperatives): they associate several categories of members with diverging interests (Margado, 2012; Becuwe et al., 2014; Béji-Bécheur et al., 2016). They also have in common that they are in a permanent process of experimentation and adjustment to improve democracy in cooperatives; because, beyond the necessary but insufficient principles, statutes and regulatory texts, it is also a question of thinking about their evolution, as recommended by the Conseil Supérieur à l'Economie Sociale et Solidaire in France (CSESS, 2017). While the legal formula 'one person = one vote in the general assembly' is convenient, as it is common to all SSE organizations (Caire and Chevallier, 2017; Caire and Nivoix, 2012), it is nonetheless very reductive and does not say much about actual practices (Lanciano et al., 2014; Chevallier, 2018; Chevallier and

Dellier, 2020). It is indeed this institute/institute dialogue that Henri Desroche (1985) emphasized in his time.

In this paper, we seek to answer the following question: beyond the principles and statutes, how can participation in the democratic life, transparency in decision-making and the process of co-construction of decisions in large multi-member cooperatives be made to work?

Following a reflexive logic, this paper is part of a social investigation and action research approach on the respective practices of Railcoop and SmartCoop. From a comparative perspective, this case study (Yin, 1983; Dumez, 2013) aims to distance itself from the practices, with attention to the possible gaps between democratic intention and its concrete realization, its potential biases, potential source of tensions. More specifically, this work is part of the rich cooperative tradition (Desroches 1990; Draperi, 2007; Ballon et al., 2020; Ballon et al., 2022), echoing the pragmatist tradition of enquiry as democratic process (Dewey, 1938).

Among the spaces and practices studied in this paper, there are several experiments at Railcoop: different forms of participation in general assemblies, functioning by 'circles', inspired by sociocratic principles, working groups within the governance circle to revise the rules of weighting, transparency or parity, surveys inspired by participatory action research, and experimentation with drawing lots to mobilize a wider public than those who spontaneously apply. At SmartCoop, the experiments studied are: the Smart in Progress participatory process set up in 2014 in parallel with the evolution and transformation of Smart into a cooperative (effective in 2017, the participation and observation of trade union representatives in management bodies (Board of Directors), the random selection to make up part of an ethics committee, and the move towards more horizontal management.

On the analytical level, to compare the two cases, we rely in particular on the grid of G. Caire and S. Nivoix (2012), in particular the evaluation criteria relating to participation (especially in general meetings), management and the exercise of democratic power. It will be adapted to the specificities of multi-member cooperatives, based on the literature on this type of cooperatives (Margado, 2012; Becuwe et al., 2014; Béji-Bécheur et al., 2016; Lanciano et al., 2014), as well as taking into account the sociocratic and holacratic inspirations that inspire the rules and practices of the two cooperatives (Maître, 2021; Ollivier and Rospabé, 2021).

This paper compares the formal and informal arrangements and the evolution of the dynamics of participation in democratic governance at Railcoop and SmartCoop, highlighting their practices, the tensions encountered and the experiments undertaken to reduce them. We show that these two cooperatives must skillfully maintain a discourse that highlights their alternative dimension (Del Fa and Vasquez, 2019), as a factor of attractiveness and motivation for members, as well as daily practices. Although participation never reaches 100%, it is necessary to ensure that the voice of member-policyholders is expressed regularly and with full knowledge of the facts. In this respect, we show the importance of a permanent reflexivity on our practices, through surveys, writing, and spaces favorable to critical and contradictory discussions, provided that this is done in a constructive and transparent way. Beyond that, we show the interest of highlighting the 5th and 6th principle of the ICA - education, training and information on the one hand and inter-cooperation on the other - between two co-operatives sharing issues related to governance and democratic participation.

Special issues of member-control and democracy within co-operative context

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Background

The international co-operative principles and values guide the co-operative operations. Particularly the principle 4. highlights democracy and member control. However, we do not fully understand how this operates in practice. This empirical research study of governance and member-control in large co-operatives helps to fill the gaps in our knowledge.

Kaswan (2014) argues that while co-operatives are being promoted as a form of empowerment due to their inherently democratic nature alongside being a model for community wealth building, it is relevant to question how democratic they really are? Prior literature has identified some issues of why and how the democratic nature of co-operatives is challenged. Challenges can for example be related to isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell 1983), managerialism (Kaswan 2014; Puusa & Saastamoinen 2023), or the size of an organization (Tuominen et al. 2009; Basterretxea et al. 2022). Democracy may also be challenged due to issues related to governance (Puusa & Saastamoinen 2023), passiveness or members (Spear 2004; Basterretxea et al. 2022) or aims and understanding related to the dual nature of co-ops (Draheim, 1952; Novkovic et al. 2022).

Aim of the article

The purpose of this study is to examine member control from the perspective of the cooperative's management. The data was collected from representatives of both operational management and chairs of boards and supervisory councils. The research seeks answers to the following questions: how does the management interpret the state and means of member control in a co-operative context? How do the interpretations reflect the democratic nature of co-ops?

Methodology

This is a qualitative empirical study. The data was collected through 35 thematic interviews with managers of Finnish consumer and producer cooperatives. The interviewees represent 7 of the largest co-ops in Finland. The sample includes both top operational managers and chairpersons of the co-ops' board of directors or supervisory boards. The analysis was conducted via qualitative content analysis, which is widely used in the field of social sciences (Neuendorf, 2017). Atlas.ti software was used as a technical aid to code the data.

Empirical findings (work-in-progress)

Based on the data, the interviewees interpret that the role of the member, from the perspectives of decision-making and the use of power, is to use the co-ops services, to have a right to vote and stand as a candidate and be elected to the cooperative's governing bodies.

The interviews leave the impression that there is not many serious attempts nor a collective will to hear the members directly. Instead, it is collectively interpreted that ownership control is implemented through governance. The interviewees however had different views on it, especially through which governance body, or which of them has the most central role in terms of the issue of ownership control. In general, it was brought up that the members of governance bodies represent the voice of the membership and that was perceived as adequate and the representativeness as sufficient even though the interviewees represent cooperatives with a very large membership, even more than 100,000 members.

Those interviewees who did question it recognized this to be a major flaw and a potential threat to the future. Despite this, it seems very difficult for these interviewees to identify the means of involving the broader membership.

The interviewees collectively associate the value of democracy with the co-operative idea. However, democracy is connected to the above-mentioned aspects, i.e. conventional electoral conception of representative democracy not realizing that democracy is more about a holistic governance decision-making system. This view was emphasized particularly in consumer co-operatives rather than by the representatives of producer co-ops.

In addition, particularly in consumer co-ops, the interviewees described that within governance it is the rule rather than the exception that all decisions are unanimous. Based on the data however, this can be interpreted as an expected operational principle rather than a genuine manifestation of democracy. The most critical named this as a direct result of centralized power, where the CEO's role is overemphasized.

The producer cooperatives (forest, milk, meat sectors) had a clear ownership strategy, while the consumer cooperatives did not. The ownership strategy is based on consultation with the governance bodies and it also specifies and defines the role of the governance as a whole and in relation to the executive management. From the member's point of view, for example the basis of profit sharing were defined in the strategy.

This is a work-in-progress, but so far the empirical findings are very interesting. It seems that the actualization of the member control is limited and it takes place via governance bodies. The democracy is mainly interpreted through its electoral conception whereas the quality of democracy remains as an open question since especially in consumer co-operative context the operational management seems to hold an excessive power and thus, the governance system neither actualises its potential nor meets the original ideas of co-op movement.

Keywords: Co-operative, Co-operative Governance, Democracy, Member-control

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A review of the materialization of the United Nations Habitat policies in Colombia

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Metropolitan areas are home to the largest number of the world's population, these areas have an important capacity to generate wealth and well-being, but they also face serious difficulties for the habitat of their population, particularly in countries with emerging economies (Deboulet et al., 2018). The metropolitan area of Valle de Aburrá in Colombia, (hereinafter, AMVA) is home to a population of more than three million people and faces different types of threats to the quality of its habitat (Area Metropolitana del Valle de Aburrá, 2021) . In this area, the policies of the United Nations Organization on habitat are basically implemented by the mayors of the ten municipalities that comprise it. In Colombian legislation there is a document called land management plan (Senate of Colombia, 2022) , which is the document in which land management guidelines are set in the municipalities, for this presentation, the information contained in the ten territorial planning plans of ten municipalities that make up the AMVA and it was determined that there are threats to the quality of the habitat in this area (Area Metropolitana del Valle de Aburrá, 2021), which is why it is necessary that both public and private entities dedicated to construction activity, develop relationship skills that allow them to identify the needs and threats to the environment in all areas of the territory, obtain and share resources, and design programs and actions to counteract those threats. This is part of a strategy called "territorial solidarity", a strategy derived from the principles of the social economy, which can be implemented in various metropolitan areas of the world (Silva, 2003).

Key words: Habitat; Construction; Valle de Aburra; Policies; Territorial development

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Social accounting for development. Case study: Corporación Interuniversitaria de Servicios de Medellín, Colombia

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We are seeing in the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) the foundations of a new economy that not only significantly reduces the scope of social externalities associated with the conventional for-profit enterprise, but also fosters equitable models of resource and surplus distribution and promotes social, cultural, and power relations that can be considered democratic, empowering and emancipatory (Utting, van Dijk, & Matheï, 2014). On the other hand, trends have been consolidated against the evaluation of the social performance and impact of SSE among governments and impact foundations and investors, subject to financial constraints and motivated to improve "value for money" of their investments, seeking impact and performance data to maximize the social impact of their investments through the allocation of funds in an efficient manner that allows generating measurable and tangible results (Salathé-Beaulieu, 2019). Given that South America is presenting an expansion of SSE through the efforts of UNASUR and MERCOSUR (Saguier & Brent, 2017) it is necessary to focus on what specific SSE practices and agendas have been incorporated as relevant practices. That is why in the framework of measuring the social and solidarity economy (SSE) this paper evaluates the social impact on the development of the Corporación Interuniversitaria de Servicios (CIS) as an articulator of public and private efforts in the municipality of Medellín, Antioquia, Colombia.

Keywords: social value; social impact; social accounting; social impact measurement; social impact indicators.

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Eco-innovation Driver Element for Sustainability in the Olive Oil Cooperative

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The process of globalization has caused environmental deterioration, pollution, and climate change, which, together with technological progress, has led to a necessary change in the attitudes of society as a whole and the need to promote sustainable development. Sustainability implies organizational change and new ways of producing and marketing with greater environmental respect that entail the adoption of eco-innovations in their broadest sense (eco-products, eco-processes, eco-organization, and eco-marketing) (OECD, 1997: 2000; Rennings, 2000). It should not be forgotten that eco-innovation is a necessary condition, although it is not sufficient for sustainability, and that a large part of the agri-food industries is in an initial stage of sustainable transformation (Carrillo-Labella et al., 2020).

In this industry, it can be said that the olive oil producing industry is very polluting, causes considerable pollution due to the large amount of waste it generates, affecting both the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems (Roig et al., 2006; Guerrero-Baena et al., 2015) and, therefore, this industry is increasingly aware of the impact and consequences that its actions have on the environment and sustainability.

As indicated, the olive industry is in an incipient process of sustainable transformation and has been adopting behaviors in this line such as the integration of quality standards such as ISO 9001 and environmental standards such as ISO 14001 (Carrillo-Labella et al., 2020). Standards that ensure environmental behavior and can lead to increased eco-innovation in its broadest sense (Del Rio, 2009; Del Rio et al., 2016),

Under this incipient scenario, this exploratory study is carried out through focus groups composed of eight expert participants in eco-innovation both in the business field and among specialists in the olive sector and research experts belonging to prestigious research centers such as the CSIC. The objective of the study is to know the expert's perception regarding the processes of eco-innovation in olive cooperatives, identify those factors that can be drivers or conductors for the adoption of eco-innovation and provide a description of the eco-innovative situation. This work was carried out in June 2021.

As predicted, olive cooperatives are in the early stages of transition, with a current emphasis on eco-innovation of processes, and eco-organization, and a lower priority on eco-marketing, indicating that they are in the stage of necessary restructuring and organizational change (Horbach et al., 2012). It is perceived that this behavior is motivated more by cost savings like other studies (Derimel and Keisidou, 2011) and the obtaining of tangible benefits (results) as well as intangibles (the creation of value and the image of the company) more, than by environmental considerations. It is also more intense in those companies that were previously more proactive in innovation and investment in R&D I (?) in line with other studies (Honik and Ruzzier, 2016).

It also highlights the importance of stakeholders in the process of eco-innovation and sustainability such as intermediaries or distribution, public administration through regulation, and especially the market and consumers, in line with (Del Rio et al., 2016).

It is also perceived as necessary to provide training and information regarding the benefits and implication of the transformation of the industry towards eco-innovation and its involvement in respecting the environment. As well as the necessary improvement of the relationship with research institutions and a regulatory and normative system that guides them in this process of transformation, that is, an improvement of environmental regulation in line with (Del Rio et al., 2016).

The necessary cooperation with other agents in this transformation process, such as suppliers and/or associated companies, stands out as a driving factor towards eco-innovation in its broadest sense, as also pointed out (Horbach et al., 2012). They perceive special relevance in the previous behaviors of competitors and insist on the regulatory work that public institutions can carry out (Horbach et al., 2012; Del Rio et al., 2016; Hojnik and Ruzzier, 2016).

In addition, they give special importance, as motivation in this transition, to the search for better commercial and financial results of cooperatives, which leads them to an adequate professionalization of the sector and a demanding training of managers and employees towards eco-innovation and sustainability, as well as their social responsibility as a creation of value for organizations.

Certain barriers continue to be perceived in the eco-innovative and sustainable transformation, including the lack of resources and capacities, which are conditioned in many cases by the size of the cooperatives, as well as the lack of qualification of the management team and employees. R&D still has limited eco-innovative and investment capacity, as well as a lack of investment orientation in R&D, which is one of the primary means of achieving this transformation (Hojnik and Ruzzier, 2016). This ecological transition effort entails significant costs and investments that, while in the long run the investment may result in cost savings, in the short term it means having one financial resource that is frequently unviable.

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Student cooperatives in France : balancing resistance, innovation and adaptation. Cross analysis about Solidarité Etudiante and Coop'en 8

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Background :

Since the 2000s, in a context characterized by the emergence of policies for the so-called “professionalization” of students and researchers in higher-education institutions, introduced in the French landscape by the law on the “Freedom and Responsibilities of Universities” (LRU), and rising awareness of entrepreneurship (creation of the Pépites programmes in 2013 and the dissemination of the spirit of entrepreneurship in the university environment, see Curri 2008), there is a growing interest in student initiatives.

Over recent years, many student initiatives have been implemented to offer services based on solidarity in response to social needs that are not or are poorly covered. The first student cooperatives can be found as early as the 1930s. In the modern era, initiatives have been developed in the spirit of the original cooperative services of the UNEF (main French student union) on campuses. For example, the cooperative society of collective interest (Scic SA) Solidarité étudiante (SE), developed numerous services and projects on university campuses between its creation, in 2012, and 2019.

In addition, cooperative initiatives have emerged within the central or shared services of universities. Indeed, the French university is undergoing several upheavals and is now integrating missions relating to the professional integration of students, the needs of the territory in which it is located, and social and societal responsibility (Ros et al, 2021). One example is the Coop'en 8 project, run by the joint Information, Orientation and Professional Integration Department of the University Paris 8 (Scuio-IP). This experiment is innovative in several respects. It is the first ephemeral student cooperative implemented within a French higher-education institution.

It is interesting to see how experiences, implemented and followed over time, such as SE and Coop'en 8 make it possible to question the role and effects of cooperative entrepreneurship vis-à-vis classic entrepreneurship, particularly in terms of social innovation but also economic citizenship.

Aim :

Based on two practical cases, the aim of this article is to suggest an analysis of student cooperative practices in France in order to draw hypotheses and proposals for all university and cooperative

actors, partly in response to the joint reflections between the conference of university presidents and SSE actors (Balaudé and Baillat, 2015).

Methods:

The paper is based on a qualitative analysis of archive documents of Solidarité Etudiante (the first student Cooperative Society of Collective Interest in France, which deployed its activities from 2012 to 2019), documents on the ephemeral student cooperative, Coop'en 8, implemented within the University of Paris 8 since 2018 (activity report, minutes, etc.), and data from interviews conducted with different stakeholders of the ephemeral cooperative.

Results and discussion :

Whether initiated by students such as Solidarité Etudiante or by the university institution such as Coop'en 8, student-run cooperative experiments lead student cooperators to take on social issues arising from their own social needs. The diversity of the activities testifies to this: cafeterias, accommodation, free repair service and self-training in the repair of students' digital tools, the creation of urban events around meals made from recycled food, the upcycling of clothing, etc.

In addition, this qualitative analysis is conducted to show the articulations, convergences and divergences of these initiatives with public policies aiming to encourage student entrepreneurship, and more generally the policies of liberalisation of the field of higher education. We wish to highlight the capacity for social and civic innovation made possible by student cooperatives on campuses.

The proposed analysis thus attempts to understand how and why these projects emerge and how they are driven by and/or for students.

Contributions and implications :

In a position of management and collective leadership of these cooperatives, the students are led to question their socio-economic environment and the dominant model (Bodet, Lamarche 2020). These also invites them to experience work and organisational governance models in a different way: "The fact that it is a cooperative is such a different vision from the classic company (...) When I am [at my student work] and when I am at the cooperative, it is two different worlds. Yet it's the same principle, looking for customers and fulfilling orders." A 2019 Coop'en 8 cooperator.

These dimensions are to be grasped, today, in regard to the consequences of both increasing hardships and impoverishment faced by students and the effects of the sought professionalisation of the French Higher education system (Pinto, 2014) in relation to certain liberalisation dynamics, on the model of private schools, through entrepreneurship awareness programmes (Chambard 2020), as well as reduced social policies marked by diminishing resources granted to the public student life service and thus the helps and support provided to students (CROUS). We would like to highlight how these spaces and experiences are structured and how it would be possible to support them and their development.

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Embracing paradox through a regeneration process: a case study of Mondragon

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Theoretical background

In a context of growing criticism of a capitalist economy that is producing increasing inequality, social division and environmental degradation (Adler, 2016; Doh et al., 2019), worker cooperatives (WCs) have attracted renewed attention from academic, political and civic circles, due to their alternative character and transformative potential (Atzeni, 2012; Parker et al., 2014; Zanoni et al., 2017).

Organizational sociologists and management scholars have traditionally analyzed WCs through the lens of the 'degeneration thesis', which posits that these organizations are inexorably doomed to move away from their democratic roots and community-oriented goals, and adopt capitalist-like practices and strategic priorities to survive (Webb & Webb, 1914; Meister, 1974; Ben-Ner 1984; Bonin et al., 1993).

An alternative body of research has put the determinism of the degeneration thesis in question by revealing that WCs can mobilize different strategic resources not only to attenuate degeneration (Kokkinidis, 2015; Barros & Michaud, 2020; Pek, 2021; Soetens & Huybrechts, 2022) but also to regenerate.

Other authors, however, propose a more nuanced and complex view of regeneration. Drawing on a paradox perspective (Westenholz, 1999), they argue that WCs 'are neither fully democratic nor oligarchic but sites of continuous and unresolved contestation between oligarchic and democratic tensions' (Storey et al., 2014: 641; see also Varman & Chakrabarti, 2004).

Aims

This article examines the setup, development, and outcomes of an important cooperative regeneration project at Mondragon Cooperative Corporation (MCC), which is celebrated as the largest and most influential worker-owned-and-governed organization in the world (Webb and Cheney, 2014). We analyse how a large regeneration process can raise organizational members' awareness of the paradoxical character of their organisation through the confrontation of its formal policies with the reality.

The methods of analysis

We adopt a qualitative case study approach (Yin, 2017) to examine how WCs embrace their paradoxical nature through a regeneration process. This method is justified for exploring complex organizational phenomena about which theoretical and empirical knowledge is limited (Gehman et al., 2018), and which involve inquiring about why and how organizations adapt, change, and evolve over time (Van de Ven, 2007).

Our primary data source consisted of 45 in-depth interviews conducted between early 2016 and late 2022 with members of MCC involved in the design and implementation of the RMCE regeneration project, and members of the two case-study WCs.

Results and Discussion

Especially since the mid-1980s, MCC WCs have registered extraordinary growth and professionalization in order to acquire the necessary size and managerial capabilities to survive in a rapidly changing environment (Bretos et al., 2019). As noticed by several observers, this has triggered major degeneration dynamics in Mondragon.

In 2005, MCC set in motion a massive process of internal debate and self-reflection entitled 'Reflection on the Meaning of the Mondragon Cooperative Experience' (hereafter, RMCE). This debate resulted in the approval of a series of regeneration formal policies at MCC's 2007 Cooperative Congress, aimed at revitalizing cooperative ideals and practices along three areas: participation and cooperation, cooperative training and education, and social transformation.

Our findings reveal that principal factors conditioning the implementation of the formal policies for regeneration can be divided in three main groups. First, the factors related to the economic sector of the WCs. Second, the factors related with the economic situation of the market. Third, the factors related with socio-cultural context.

Contributions and implications

The article's contribution is threefold. First, our study reveals how a regeneration process can serve as a tool to manage tension and shift between competing demands (Vallaster et al. 2019; Jazabkowski et al. 2021) at the time it encourages the embracement of its paradoxical nature (Miron-Spektor et al. 2018; Smith & Lewis 2022).

Second, our study discloses the dialectical character of the relation between volatile contexts and WCs' internal adaptation to them.

Finally, our study illustrates how degeneration and regeneration evolve in large and internationalised WCs (Elorza and Garmendia 2021), a process so far documented in small cooperatives.

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The role of community cooperatives and shared administration to rethink the State-market dualism and overcome polarization processes

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Background. Three global crises in less than fifteen years have triggered a systemic transformation that is similar in pervasiveness and magnitude, but of the opposite sign as that which marked the end of the Glorious Thirties. After decades characterized by overconfidence in well-functioning markets as sufficient solution to the concentration of power in large business groups, and more generally as the most appropriate institutions to deal with socio-economic and environmental challenges, the state has once again become the main institution to deal with increasingly frequent and diversified global crises (Sacchetti and Salvatori, 2023).

Also, the State-Market dualism is questioned in favour of a pluralist vision focused on polycentrism and institutional diversity (Ostrom, 2010; Sacchetti et al. 2021), which recognizes and expands the space for the intervention of social and solidarity economy enterprises and organizations. The element that makes it necessary to rethink the State-Market dualism in a context that enhances organizational and institutional diversity lies in the persistence of social and territorial imbalances, which in fact exacerbate inequalities and multidimensional poverty, to the point of causing, in the most serious cases, epistemic injustices (Hymer, 1972; Hirschmann, 1988; Myrdal, 1957).

Aims. Starting from these premises, this contribution addresses the issue of disaffection for public life (Hirschmann, 1979; Sacchetti and Sugden, 2009) as a consequence of the persistence of processes of polarization of social and territorial dynamics and proposes instead the empowerment of community cooperatives and their explicit involvement in social and territorial development processes through, for example, nested and cooperative solutions between public administrations and community cooperatives (Pestoff et al. 2006). Specifically, the research answers the following questions: what are the root causes of polarization processes? How the latter influence the effectiveness of public action and the "conveniences" of for-profit organizations? What are the consequences at social level for controlling stakeholders and peripheral actors? What is the role for community cooperatives in reconnecting the localities to the wider space of public and for-profit action?

Methods. The analysis begins with the design of a theoretical framework, which is used to illustrate how the spatial imbalances and inequalities that derive from polarization processes are exacerbated and manifest their effects especially during recessions and in times of crises, when the action of public administrations is limited at least by budgetary constraints, and conventional for-profit

organizations' choices are directed towards what is in the interest of the controlling stakeholders (e.g. what is financially sound). The theoretical framework is used to illustrate how, in during crises, the polarization process that took off in the 1970s through transnational corporations' strategies and monopoly capitalism becomes even more evident (Cowling and Sugden, 1998). Within this framework, the research focuses on the role of community cooperatives in satisfying at least part of the unmet local demand for goods and services and social groups not served by either the market or the state. Indeed, by responding to the needs of marginalized actors and communities, they do not incur distance costs (i.e., they are centered on people's local needs), they are not committed to the maximization of surplus and, at least in the short run, they are able to pay lower monetary wages than for-profit enterprises, as they can reward workers with a mix of monetary and non-monetary benefits, which often include greater job stability and satisfaction for other-regarding activities.

Results and discussion. The results of the analysis show how, particularly during crises, controlling stakeholders retain a focus on core business activities with higher strategic control, professionalization and salaries, or follow proximity innovation patterns. Peripheral actors, on the contrary, loose resources in terms of income, and access to strategic decisions that have an impact on people's life and opportunities. In most cases, marginalized actors and territories are excluded from the benefits of the market economy while bearing its external costs, but also from the public sector, which has reproduced monopsonistic hierarchies when arranging the production of meritorious goods through competitive bids, incentivizing participant organizations (whether profit or nonprofit) to overpromising on the quality of services (moral hazard) and minimizing costs at the expense of salary levels.

Contribution and implications. The research contributes to integrate in a microeconomic framework the broad socioeconomic literature on social and territorial polarization. Also, the research contextualizes the existing literature on community cooperatives within the broader framework of regional studies. Based on the quali-quantitative results achieved, we suggest that:

a) within a socioeconomic framework characterized by the dualism between spatial agglomerates and left behind peripheries, cooperatives and more balanced co-planning and co-production relations with public administrations may contribute to narrowing spatial inequalities, by giving access to community cooperatives to the strategic function so far exclusively retained by public administrations, and turning the cooperative attitude into a broader vision coherent with a mutualistic and shared approach to development.

b) In the long run, community cooperatives and shared administration solutions can trigger local development and reconnect the locality to the broader space for action of the public sector and the market.

Ethics of democratic governance. Economically important Chilean housing cooperatives.

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ABSTRACT

The hermeneutic phenomenon of Cooperative Democratic Governance is presented from an ethical perspective.

I present the meaning of a perception of the phenomenon contained in statements based on cooperative principles proposed by the ICA, like the ones that are expressed locally in a communicative action that seeks to establish a rational consensus that enables the agency of best practices of C.D.G as non-strategic expectations.

Valid interlocutors in the communicative action shall be considered not only the people who make up the managerial and corporate structure of the cooperative, but also external agents with a voice who have various interests of different kinds in that activity.

The cooperative shall be recognized by its members, people who make up its structure and those who are related in any way to it and to the community, and it shall be identified as such by principles, including the principles of democratic participation by the members and interest in the community, as well as the ethical values that guide its actions and decisions, including its Governance.

Why do cooperative principles and values make it imperative that its governance be democratic?

Would it be identified as cooperative because of this characteristic?

Is it ethically a current requirement for cooperatives?

Is it relevant that user members speak up and express their perception of the phenomenon of governance in an C.A.?

Are the members of management, user members, workers in the cooperative, and stakeholders all potential participants in the discussion to uphold, rationally and consensually with the intention of validity, the ethic that guides the morals of its governance?

Why should the C.D.G. be made into an C.A.?

New lines of thought and questions are sought to reinforce the statements based on discursive rationality with universal intention for the cooperatives being analyzed. I intend to contribute some additional grounds that uphold the validity of the C.D.G. as the minimum ethic required to identify it as a phenomenon in development, not the formulation of a static universal regulatory statement for each and every cooperative.

METHODS

A brief local C.A. among valid interlocutors from different sectors of its internal structure including user members, neighboring communities, private and public stakeholders discussing the relevance of the C.D.G. with rational arguments.

Surveys at different levels of cooperatives; in the relevant environment: members of the legislative and executive branches; local authorities; banks; construction companies; suppliers; and neighboring communities.

Interviews in cooperatives and other entities about the perception of the phenomenon.

The analysis of a bibliographic selection that addresses the phenomenal meaning and the C.A. of contemporary hermeneutic Philosophers to rationally substantiate the C.D.G.

HYPOTHESIS

The C.D.G. is an ethical characteristic; per se it is intrinsically included in the very meaning of its actions, assuring the agency of the cooperative principles of democratic control of its members and interest in the community.

The Governance phenomenon of economically important cooperatives is an evolutionary process, not an act, subject in a globalized economy to the influences, pressures, and expectations of the people, media, and society involved in its activity.

C.D.G. with the discursive agency reduces the risk of being eroded and replaced by data-oriented governance.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Facilitating knowledge, under the global requirement, of the minimum standard requirable for best practices of the C.D.G., as well as its level of development in the sphere being analyzed.

ABBREVIATIONS

C.D.G. Cooperative democratic governance

C.A. Communicative action

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GENDER DIVERSITY ON THE BOARDS OF DIRECTORS AND TOP MANAGEMENT OF COOPERATIVES: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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GENDER DIVERSITY ON THE BOARDS OF DIRECTORS AND TOP MANAGEMENT OF COOPERATIVES: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

Background: The concern about diversity, inclusiveness, and the reduction of social inequality goes through borders and become a global concern. This is also part of the reality of cooperatives worldwide. Equality development is one of the core cooperative principles established by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA, 1995), which has developed strategies to promote gender equality as a global priority and established a series of action plans to address the issue. According to the International Co-Operative Alliance Asia and Pacific (2015), one way to eliminate potential gender biases, explicit, implicit, and real in cooperatives is to adopt gender equality, which helps to create a positive environment and improve the productivity. Because it is a differentiated business model, with principles and values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, and solidarity, is expected that cooperatives promote the goals of sustainable development. Due to their specific characteristics, of fostering economic and social development, cooperatives should be, a priori, a favorable environment for the integral development of people and communities, guaranteeing free, voluntary, equitable and diverse participation. In the meantime, in countries with a large presence of cooperatives such as Brazil, for example, that had 4,880 cooperatives in 2021, with 18,8 million members and 493,2 thousand employees (OCB, 2022) diversity on boards and top management is not yet a reality. According to the Brazilian Institute of Corporate Governance – IBGC (2022) women represented, in 2021, 14.3% of the boards of directors in Brazil. The data also show that, in Brazil, only 13.3% of boards of directors have at least 30% women, while the world scenario is 46.5%, and in France and Norway this percentage exceeds the percentage of 96%. Aims: In this way, the aim of this systematic literature review (SLR) is to identify the most relevant scientific findings and the research methodologies used, in order to understand the state of the art in this specific field. Methods: For this, a survey of scientific articles from 2012 to 2022 was carried out in the ISI Web of Science using the key terms “Gender Diversity AND Cooperative Governance”, “Gender Diversity AND Corporate Governance”, “Cooperative AND Gender Equality”, “Cooperative Governance AND Inclusiveness”. Results and discussion: The results show that gender diversity in boards of directors has the potential to add value to the organizations that promote it, as verified by Hernández Ortíz et al. (2020) in research with Spanish agrifood cooperative societies. In Spain, the second country in the world to legally require gender quotas on boards, Reguera-Alvarado et al., (2017) examined the relationship between gender diversity on boards and economic outcomes, and state that the increase in the number of women on boards is positively related to better economic results. There are several studies that approach the relationship between the number of women in the boards and

the economic and financial results of the cooperatives. However, the researchers present different results, i.e., positive, negative, and non-significant relationships between women's participation on the results of cooperatives. (Terjesen et. al., 2016, Esteban-Salvador et. al., 2019; Hernández Ortiz et. al., 2020; Hatipoglu, 2021; Kenkel 2020; Meliá-Martí et. al., 2020) Contributions and implications: This study intends to contribute to the knowledge on this field, by identifying experiences from different countries and realities, providing subsidies for greater effectiveness of cooperative governance, and disseminating good practices worldwide about gender diversity on boards of directors and top management. In the course of this paper other studies will be explored in more depth, with the view to bring necessary theoretical and conceptual advances for this field.

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The influence of cultural dimensions on the financial soundness of mutual insurance organizations

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Background

There have been several studies suggesting that there is a link between the risk-taking behavior of a firm and the national culture the respective firm is subject to (e.g., Li et al. 2013). Gaganis et al. (2019) look at the influence of three different Hofstede cultural dimensions: individualism, uncertainty avoidance index and power distance index on insurer soundness. They find that individualism has a negative effect on the soundness of insurers, while the relationship between both uncertainty avoidance and power distance and soundness is positive. However, the sample that is used by the authors is quite specific as it contains approximately 66% mutual insurers. These mutuals are the cooperative ownership form in the insurance industry. Although the authors control for organizational form, we argue that given the organizational differences between mutual and stock insurers, this specific setting might skew the results presented.

In Gaganis et al. (2019) the main arguments for a link between national culture and the financial soundness of insurers, stem from the behavior of the managers and the customers that is impacted by the respective culture. We argue that these two channels will be more prevalent in mutual insurers. As managers in a mutual are less controlled, they will have more opportunities to behave according to their own beliefs. Besides, as the policyholders are also the owners of a mutual and there is no group of external shareholders, the culture of these policyholders will play a more important role.

Providing these arguments, we want to look at how individualism, uncertainty avoidance and power distance impact the financial soundness of mutual and stock insurers differently.

Aims

The goal of this paper is to provide evidence for a difference between the impact of national culture on the financial soundness of mutual and stock insurance organizations.

Methods

The sample of this paper exists of 3,263 life and non-life insurers from 63 different countries (of which 462 are organized as mutuals). We obtain accounting data from Orbis Insurance for the years 2011-2020.

To find the effect of the cultural dimensions on the financial soundness of mutual and stock insurers, we build on the work of Gaganis et al. (2019), but add interactions with mutuality like in Rubio-Misas

(2020). Using this data, we construct a random effects panel data regression where we include the Z-score (a soundness measure calculated by dividing the sum of profitability and capitalization over the riskiness of an insurer) as dependent variable and where the interaction terms are our variables of interest.

To account for a potential problem of endogeneity in our empirical setting, we include a Heckman (1979) treatment model as a robustness check.

Results and Discussion

Overall, we find that the effect of individualism on the financial soundness of insurers is negative, while the effects of uncertainty avoidance and power distance are positive. These results are in line with Gaganis et al. (2019). However, as hypothesized, the results show that these effects are mainly driven by the subsample of the mutual insurers. For stock insurers, there does not appear to be a significant effect of the cultural dimensions on financial soundness. This evidence is strengthened by the additional specification where we subdivide the insurers into environments where mutuals are less (more) pressured to assimilate to stock insurers. For all three cultural dimensions, we generally find that the cultural effect on mutual financial soundness is more (less) outspoken in these respective environments relative to the effect for stock insurers.

These results suggest that there is a significant interaction between the organizational structure of an organization and the culture it operates in.

Contribution and Implications

With this paper, we contribute to the academic literature by adding to the research on the influence of national culture on the behavior of organizations, and the interaction between this national culture and the organizational form of those organizations. We provide evidence of a mutual effect on the relationship between national culture and the financial soundness of insurance organizations, suggesting that the effect that can be found in this literature, might be (mostly) driven by one specific organizational form.

Secondly, we provide a contribution to the knowledge of regulators on the effect of organizational forms on the operations of insurance organizations. When drafting regulatory frameworks, policymakers should take into account that these effects not only strongly depend on the culture that the respective insurers are operating in (e.g., Carretta et al., 2015 suggest that enforcement of banking regulation is subject to the national culture of the supervisor), but also that different organizational forms are differently affected by national culture.

Finally, we contribute to the knowledge of mutual insurance stakeholders about their own organizational model. As the literature shows, mutual insurers should be aware of the influence of the business environment they are active in on their operations. We add to this literature by providing evidence that also the macro environment plays an essential role in how they perform relative to stock insurers in the same market. More broadly, this contribution somewhat extends to the cooperative organizational model in general. As the potential managerial control issue and the more direct link of consumers to the ownership of the firm are characteristics that are present in most cooperative organizations.

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Governance Challenges in a UK Regional Consumer Cooperative

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Addressing Governance Challenges in a UK Regional Consumer Cooperative

Keywords: Governance, Consumer Coops, Polycentric Governance, Networked Governance

Theme(s): Innovations in cooperative governance

Roger Spear. Roskilde and Open Universities.

Regional Cooperative Society was originally registered as an Industrial and Provident Society, when founded in the UK 160 years ago in 1861. By the end of its first quarter of trading there were 74 members. Currently there are about 290,000 members, with 220 outlets, concentrated in Regional, but spread over the whole of the region, and 2,870 staff (termed “colleagues”), with dividend payments amounting to £3.8 million, on turnover of £355 million. They operate in food, primarily local stores, including a bakery, pharmacies, travel, funerals (including their own crematoria), and post offices. They are regarded as a strong regional society, with a strategic focus on local food stores (urban and rural), so not directly competing with large supermarkets. The keys to Regional's success are: firstly, sound financial and business strategies (including strategic investments of profits into property for many years); good management and corporate governance; an emphasis on quality regarding both customers and staff; since the 1990s, a strong emphasis on the value of membership; investing in the local communities and civil society; and, finally, they also benefit from being relatively isolated as a city and county.

Structure of the paper: The paper begins with a review of various governance theories, building up to humanistic governance, and leading onto the identification of major challenges facing consumer cooperatives. It goes on to discuss ways in which these challenges can be addressed, including institutional measures of networked/polycentric developments that are particularly relevant to the UK cooperative scene. Next it examines the governance system of Regional Cooperative Society, exploring the extent to which networked governance systems played a role. Finally, it reflects on the analysis and draws conclusions.

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Governance Review: Coops, Mutuals, NonProfits

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This paper reviews some of the main theoretical currents related to governance of cooperatives, mutuals, and nonprofits. This includes an early focus on boards, their composition, roles, and relationships, particularly with relevant stakeholders. This includes consideration of a life cycle longitudinal perspective. The paradox perspective will also be considered, particularly in helping to explain different forms of governance in different situations (including its longitudinal evolution). In contrast to the more pluralistic approach of the paradox perspective, the more optimistic, humanistic perspective will be considered as an alternative framework. The paper goes on to consider other more recent themes, such as hybridity, and here the comparative aspect of the paper, considering cooperatives, mutuals, and nonprofits, provides a fruitful basis for considering the important theme of stakeholders (single and multiple); as well as other important themes, such as different forms of democracy, and managing different logics of action. A linked theme of isomorphism will be briefly discussed in relation to logics of action. The paper goes on to explore how context has become an important factor in considering the relevance of other organisations and institutions for the structure and shape of governance in an individual cooperative. This leads into the relevance of polycentric governance as a framework for examining the relevance of context at the sectoral level, i.e. where federal bodies and other corporative institutions have important roles in shaping and supporting governance in an individual cooperative. While the main focus of the paper will be on governance in cooperatives, governance in mutuals and nonprofits will provide the basis for a comparative analysis, illustrating the main challenges facing the governance of cooperatives, and some ways that these may be addressed.

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Presentations of circular economy in cooperatives' sustainability reports and financial statements

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Circular economy (CE) approaches consider the entire life-cycle of resources. Resources should create value, from pre-use to post-use and re-enter back into the system. Societies consume over 100 billion tonnes of resources per year and only cycles 8.6% of this back into the economy (Circle Economy 2021). Attaining the objective of sustainability is dependent on the implementation of circularity.

The cooperative movement counts more than a billion members worldwide. Achieving sustainable development requires paradigm shift, transformative change in the production and consumption patterns and supply chains. Many cooperatives have been innovators in sustainable resource management in their sectors – launching e.g. consumer awareness programmes or recycling policies. Cooperatives are existing agents to promote the transformation. They are present in most countries of the world (UNDESA 2021).

Accounting and financial reporting perspectives are needed for circular economy to overcome the challenges and capture the value of circular operations. During the 2020s the movement towards deepened sustainability related regulations and standards are fastened. Standards contribute the transition from the current linear economy to more sustainable circular economy. Sustainability reporting standards, which are being advanced are among others the ESRS, IFRS and SASB. Also ISO is drafting standards for conceptual framework; description of circular business models and methods to measure circularity at different system levels. The alignment between the standards are still in progress.

GRI launched the first globally applicable reporting standard for companies to report of waste impacts (including waste prevention measures taken) along their value chains (PRI 2022; GRI 306). GRI cooperates as a long standing standard initiative (since 1997) the sustainability reporting frameworks with other initiatives.

Aims

As circular economy continues to move from the niche to the mainstream, the reporters need to be prepared to more complex processes, how to measure the impacts of adopting circular economy practices. The reporters who already have reported sustainability issues are probably the reporters who have also reported about circularity issues. This study aims to explore how circular economy is already presented within the sustainability reporting of cooperatives. What kind of readiness or baseline the cooperatives have when the reporting of their circular economy performance will be mandatory.

Data and Methods

The explorative comparative content analysis study focused on the top 300 largest cooperative and mutual organisations or companies with cooperative roots (ICA & EURICSE 2022). The agriculture, food and retailer sectors cooperatives, which published the GRI Standards reports in English language included in the study. The study concentrated on the Circular economy and the indicators in the GRI 306. Also were utilized the audited parts of the financial reports from the same publishing year if available.

Results and discussion

The findings were that the circular economy related information was clearly an important issue for reporters to present, but high complexity was evident. The GRI 306 seemed to be a starting point to reporting practices, but the CE reporting overall is still developing. Besides the difficulties faced by a more complex structuring of the business operations that is required by the circular economy process, there were difficulties concerning how to measure the impact of adopting circular economy practices. These difficulties included both sustainability reporting and the financial performance reporting. Recent regulation developments highlight the transparency and linkages between sustainability and financial reporting simultaneously. These linkages between CE and financial reports were apparently challenging.

This study is part of the on going research concerning circular economy reporting challenges. The transition towards CE requires transparency, further research is needed to better define the possible characteristics of cooperatives and CE.

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Partnerships between Work Integration Social Enterprises and Conventional Enterprises

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Background

In recent years, collaborations between work integration social enterprises (WISEs) and conventional enterprises (CEs) have attracted the interest of scholars, policymakers, social workers and conventional entrepreneurs. These new forms of collaborations are normally framed as "cross-sectorial" and contribute to multi-actor governance.

The crucial role of these partnerships has been recently emphasized by the literature and policy debate. This notwithstanding, empirical studies on this topic are still relatively scarce (Technopolis, 2018; Austin, 2020). The objectives pursued, resources committed, results achieved, the impact generated, the opportunities and obstacles encountered by these partnerships are poorly investigated aspects, especially from a WISEs perspective (Sakarya et al., 2012).

Aims

Given the strategic importance partnerships have for both WISEs and CEs, this study aimed at investigating the main barriers, challenges, drivers, and success factors of collaborations between WISEs and CEs, developed with the aim of facilitating the work integration of disadvantaged workers (DWs) in three European countries: Croatia, Spain and France.

Methods

The study relied on both a desk research on the aspects of strength and weakness of labour market policies for each national context under analysis, paying particular attention to the factors boosting the development of cooperative agreements between WISEs and CEs, and six exploratory case studies (two for each country) of cooperative partnerships between WISEs and CEs that have proved to be effective in facilitating the work integration of DWs.

For each case study, the following aspects were analysed: the factors driving the partnership; the analysis of how the partnership is structured and how it evolved over time; the analysis of the impact of the partnership upon welfare, development and employment; the main barriers and opportunities.

Results and discussion

Although taking shape in different institutional arrangements, the fil rouge linking the practices analysed is the highly innovative nature of the relationships between WISEs and CEs.

In establishing partnerships, WISEs and CEs are pushed by different factors: while WISEs are mainly driven by the desire to offer DWs the chance to experiment with themselves in a conventional working environment, learn new skills and - if possible - be employed within the partner CE's

workforce, CEs are mainly driven by the need to fulfil legal obligations, such as those imposed by the quota system for employing people with disabilities, the desire to implement their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy and/or the need for a trained workforce. Moreover, partnering with CEs allows WISEs to acquire the necessary skills to enter new markets – with a higher added value (such as those related to ICT or culture and heritage management) than those in which they have traditionally engaged (such as, for example, green care) – so as to increase their competitiveness and be able to employ more DWs.

Despite the potential benefits for both parties involved, such collaborations are not particularly developed in any of the countries analysed. Several barriers hinder their creation. These include among others barriers concerning the institutional setting wherein WISEs operate such as the lack of legal recognition and poor visibility of WISEs, which limits in turn the awareness of the public and CEs of the added value of WISEs, unfruitful cooperation between WISEs and labour services and policies and the lack of incentives and instruments to collaborate. Other barriers are related to the difficulty to find the right partner and to combine the different cultures, values, managerial and communication styles of WISEs and CEs.

As the analysis of the case studies showed, for a collaboration to be effective, partners must be aligned on a number of key issues, particularly the purpose of the partnership and the values it embeds.

Contributions and implications

The literature and analyses conducted show that WISEs and CEs are in many instances progressively getting closer. Having said so, the lack of proper instruments and policies prevents to harness the potential of collaboration between WISEs and CEs.

Condition sine qua non for stimulating the development of partnerships on a wide scale is the legal/policy recognition of WISEs at national level. Where WISEs have been legally recognised and benefit from generous public support policies (e.g., in France), collaborations with CEs are more frequent and less challenging. On the contrary, partnerships are less developed in countries where WISEs do not enjoy full legal recognition and labour policies are mostly passive (e.g., Croatia). Finally, in the Spanish case, collaborative relationships between CEs and WISEs mostly involve the integration of persons with disabilities, for whom the public support system is more sophisticated and generous.

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TRANSLATE with x English ArabicHebrewPolish BulgarianHindiPortuguese CatalanHmong DawRomanian Chinese SimplifiedHungarianRussian Chinese TraditionalIndonesianSlovak CzechItalianSlovenian DanishJapaneseSpanish DutchKlingonSwedish EnglishKoreanThai EstonianLatvianTurkish FinnishLithuanianUkrainian FrenchMalayUrdu GermanMalteseVietnamese GreekNorwegianWelsh Haitian CreolePersian TRANSLATE with COPY THE URL BELOW Back EMBED THE SNIPPET BELOW IN YOUR SITE Enable collaborative features and customize widget: Bing Webmaster Portal Back

Formation of cooperation in school institutions and its impact on the educational system of Colombia. Investigation of the COOTRADECUN Foundation.

Presented by: tellez, arnulfo

Authors: tellez, arnulfo

Organisations: Cootradecun, Colombia

Background

The COOTRADECUN Foundation considers cooperation as a paradigm that gives rise to personal, collective, and social dynamics, one of these being cooperativism. Based on this understanding, he is creating in Colombia an innovative way of teaching cooperation from the first levels of formal education (Early childhood education, elementary school, middle school, and high school). The aspects that makeup such an innovative proposal are built within a research process that is being implemented. Four phases are described below:

First. Members of the COOTRADECUN cooperative (Multiactive Cooperative of Education Workers of Cundinamarca and the Capital District), and members of the COOTRADECUN Foundation, have found strengths and challenges regarding the classic model used in cooperative education (Co-operatives of the Americas, 2023). One of the strengths is the initial training in cooperatives for people who decide to join the cooperative, they are in the age range of 25 and 30 years. In addition, several challenges have been encountered:

(i) It is necessary to create a proposal from the perspective of cooperation within the framework of training processes (cognitive, socio-emotional, and axiological) of the child and youth population of educational institutions; (ii) A systematic, transversal proposal is required in tune with the programmatic contents, with the competencies of the educational system; (iii) It is necessary to develop within formal education programs traits of an alternative personal and collective life model, from a multidisciplinary perspective (International Cooperative Alliance, -ICA- 2023), which crosses knowledge, emotions, and actions. Such strengths and challenges of the classic cooperative education model led to the search for bibliographic references.

Second. The bibliographic findings have two major characteristics: the first one has to do with pedagogical conceptual supports that make cooperative education possible: the existence of a cooperative approach (Escorcia & Gutiérrez 2009); characterization of the cooperative learning method (Pliego 2011); post-secondary cooperative education (Freed-Lobhuk, Goussaert, Benarroch, & Juarez (2011). And the second characteristic is educational approaches that help develop a theoretical basis for forming cooperation in school environments: re-think the cooperative (Schelmer, Cioce, & Uriarte 2018), and cooperativism at the primary level (Fundación Grupo Sancor Editores & ICES 2017).

After recognizing the bibliographic references, conceptual tools were incorporated in order to create an innovative way of teaching cooperation at formal education levels.

Third. The conceptual tools are: choice and justification of the cooperation category (Téllez, 2023); and, characterization of cooperation competencies (from an academic perspective) (philpeople.org, 2019). After the analysis of the conceptual tools, we proceeded to build a research project.

Quarter. Drafting of the research project entitled: the cooperation approach and its impact on the levels of education for early childhood, primary school, middle school, and high school, COOTRADECUN research proposal to impact formal education in Colombia (COOTRADECUN Foundation, 2022). Said project is made up of four stages: state-of-the-art, explanatory framework, intervention actions, and dissemination.

The four phases of the research process are in line with aspects of the ICA 2020 - 2030 strategic plan. One of the objectives is: "We must address the exclusion of cooperatives and the cooperative identity of educational systems at all levels throughout the world from a multidisciplinary point of view". And among the strategies is: "We will promote cooperative education and training, including the inclusion of cooperatives in formal education and research programs..."

Objectives

General.

Continue with the investigation of cooperation in formal education in Colombia in order to impact the educational system.

Specific.

Theoretical - epistemological foundation of cooperation as an approach to be developed within the parameters of education.

Strengthen the investigative process: needs and expectations of the institutions, joint understanding of the objectives, the definition of procedures, characterization of intervention mechanisms, and dissemination actions.

Generate indicators to measure the impacts of the innovative way of teaching cooperation in the educational system.

Methods

Documentary analysis and participatory action research.

Results and Discussion

Design of a process for the formation of the paradigm of cooperation within the demands of the education of children and young people.

COOTRADECUN and the Foundation are interested in transferring elements of the cooperative process to the education ecosystem.

In tune with the ICA regarding the need to address the exclusion of cooperatives and cooperative identity in education systems.

Discussion. The cooperative doctrine focused on impacting educational systems requires the design of innovative educational processes, because, on the one hand, the most significant amount of

existing literature on cooperative education is focused on young people and adults, and on the other hand, educational systems have characteristics (theoretical, legal, organizational) that must be taken into account for any initiative that seeks to impact them.

Contributions and implications

The main contribution is to create an innovative proposal capable of bringing the paradigm of cooperation to the educational system, which has several implications: developing a foundation that supports the requirements of the educational system; recognizing the strengths and challenges of the classic model of cooperative training; generate spaces for exchange and feedback typical of research environments.

Finally, cooperatives and their educational processes (classical and innovative) require analyzing the challenges and impacts that artificial intelligence can bring.

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Education and cooperation within the framework of the AIC 2020 - 2030 strategic plan: challenges, experiences, and roadmap.

Presented by: tellez, arnulfo

Authors: tellez, arnulfo

Organisations: Cootradecun, Colombia

Description of the proposed session

Arnulfo Téllez, Principal Investigator Cootradecun Foundation.

The motivation of the session (Approximate time 5 minutes)

The cooperative model requires education and training processes. The experiences can be grouped into two sets: those that belong to the classical model and those called innovative.

An innovative experience is characterized by: forming the paradigm of cooperation from the first grades of schooling; deepening cooperation within the formal education system; relating cooperation to matters pertaining to the production of science and technology, to spaces for socialization, and to the development of skills.

In the classic model, training is provided to people (youth and adults) interested in belonging to a cooperative, offering updates to cooperative members, and delving into issues related to the economy, organization, and cooperation.

Characteristics of both the innovative experience and the classic model must be strengthened, but to a large extent, actions must be taken to develop cooperation from the formal educational systems (infancy, childhood, and adolescence).

Session content

Moment Activities Time

Sensitization

It will be carried out from the commented reading of the strategic objective of the promotion of cooperative identity (Strategic Plan 2020 - 2030 AIC), in which the research

experience developed by the Coostradecun Foundation will

20

min

be shared around an investigation of how to form cooperation in subjects of formal education.

"We must address the exclusion of cooperatives and cooperative identity from educational systems at all levels around the world from a multidisciplinary point of view: business, political science, history, anthropology, sociology, philosophy and development and environmental studies, as well as like other academic disciplines. This change should occur at all educational levels, and cooperatives should become an element of the primary and secondary school curricula." (Delegates 1 and 2).

In the same way, the elements of the strategic initiative will be analyzed:

"Promote cooperative education We will promote cooperative education and training, including the inclusion of cooperatives in formal education and research programs, as a necessary measure to raise the profile of cooperative identity. Curricular practices, labor insertion, and the formation of school cooperatives will be promoted". (Delegates 3, 4, and 5)

Recognition

Description of the strengths of the classic model of cooperative formation based on experiences by regions, countries, and sectors of the cooperatives, with previously elected delegates. (Carried out by each of the five delegates)

5

min

Discussion between delegates.

With the delegates, the new needs for training in cooperation will be discussed based on the guidelines set forth in the ICA strategic plan.

20

min

Opening of the discussion to the assembly.

The discussion will be opened to three people from the assembly who enrich the topics discussed.

10

min

Closure

Conclusions and roadmap.

5 min

Proposed format.

Presentation of the topic to be analyzed, discussion and roadmap.

The format in which they participate is proposed:

session manager

Participation of 5 delegates at

Co-operative Enterprises and the Ecological Transition. The role of local embeddedness, stakeholder involvement and collective capital

Presented by: Tortia, Ermanno C.

Authors: Tortia, Ermanno C.

Organisations: University of Trento, Department of Economics and Management, Italy

Cooperative enterprises are known to be locally rooted organizations, often, though not always, characterized by a high degree of stakeholder involvement. Moreover, in most countries, cooperatives are strongly characterized by the presence of collective rather than individual or private capital. This article attempts to shed new light on the potential role of cooperatives in the transition from a linear to a circular economy, based on their organizational peculiarities. Local embeddedness implies that the systemic effects between the organization and the environment impact controlling stakeholders in cooperatives more than investors controlling conventional firms. Consequently, reducing the damage caused by a linear economy in terms of environmental degradation is more likely to be a goal of cooperatives than conventional enterprises. Stakeholder theory has discussed the possibility and criteria for stakeholder involvement in conventional enterprises for several decades. On the other hand, work on the same issues has been limited in the case of cooperative enterprises, especially since some cooperative models (e.g. community cooperatives and social cooperatives) are already de facto or de jure multi-stakeholder organizations. This article draws together the lessons of institutional ecological economics on the management of common natural resources and organizational social systems theory in the study of multi-stakeholder governance to hypothesize new governance criteria and rules that could enhance the ecological impact of cooperatives as stakeholder organizations, in line with their nature as locally rooted enterprises. Furthermore, given the prominent role of collective capital in most models of cooperative enterprises, a phenomenon absent in conventional enterprises, this contribution reinterprets collective capital in cooperatives as a common resource in line with Elinor Ostrom's studies common-pool natural resources and discusses its role in cementing local embeddedness, promoting stakeholder inclusion, and building assets that can be at least partially earmarked for specific investments in ecological transitions.

Key words: cooperatives enterprises, local embeddedness, stakeholder involvement, circular economy, common-pool capital resources.

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Dealing with Belgian coop-exits: striking a balance in allowing legal restrictions on exit-rights of members to enhance innovation

Presented by: Van Baelen, Bram

Authors: Van Baelen, Bram

Organisations: KU Leuven, Belgium

Background

All companies – and thus cooperatives as well – are governed by so-called organizational law.

From a law & economics perspective, liquidation protection is one of the four essential elements offered by organizational law (Hansmann et al., 2006). Briefly summarized, liquidation protection ensures that shareholders can not withdraw their initial contribution from the company (often called: capital) at their own discretion nor that one shareholder can demand the dissolution of the company, unless by a qualified majority. This means that the contributed capital becomes illiquid for the shareholder: he cannot use the money for other opportunities. Or with other words: the capital is “locked in”. In return for this lack of liquidity, shareholders receive ‘shares’ which they can transfer to other parties.

The main advantage for the company is that it does not have to consider the risk of a shareholder withdrawing at any given time (Dari-Mattiacci et al., 2013). This allows for easier but also more efficient liquidity planning: the company can put all “means” to work and does not have to allocate assets to ensure it is able to pay back the contribution of the shareholder.

The rules of cooperatives slightly differ. The Belgian Code on Companies and Associations (Belgian CCA) requires mandatory exit-rights or withdrawal rights for members of a cooperative (Verheyden, 2021). This allows a member to withdraw from the cooperative at his own discretion. From an organizational law standpoint, these exit-rights are an exception to the principle of liquidation protection, for good reasons. Cooperatives are very much purpose-oriented legal entities, focused on providing benefits for its members (Gollier et al., 2020). Mandatory exit-rights safeguard the ICA-principle of open and voluntary membership (Guidance Notes). Therefore, limitations or restrictions regarding these withdrawal-rights should be limited. The Belgian CCA prohibits provisions in the bylaws of the cooperative that put constraints on this exit-rights. The downside of this, however, is that cooperatives lose the perks of liquidation protection.

Aims

The central hypothesis of this paper is that cooperatives (and their whole group of members of the cooperative) might benefit from certain restrictions on the exit-rights of members. This paper aims to map valid legal restrictions on mandatory exit-rights of members in a conceptual way but specified by the legal provisions of the Belgian CCA. The paper should result in an assessment framework

which balances the voluntary and open membership and legal certainty for cooperatives in capital-intensive sectors and less capital-intensive sectors.

Methods

Based on the ICA-guidelines and international doctrine on the ICA-principle of open and voluntary membership, a conceptual framework will be developed. The Belgian CCA and current legal Belgian doctrine will be assessed for the concrete situation.

The abstract focuses on three specific situations:

Cooperatives are playing a major role in the transition from fossil energy to renewable energy, especially windmill-cooperatives. Nevertheless, windmills require large amount of capital and are only generating revenues after installation. When a windmill cooperative must consider the risk of withdrawing members, there will be always capital that can not be invested in its core activity, causing a less than efficient input of means.

Housing cooperatives and community land trusts are often seen as a solution for affordable housing. At the same time, real estate is a rather illiquid asset, definitely when shared with other people. Housing cooperatives that have to consider the risk of withdrawing members will have to allocate resources specifically for this risk.

Farmers are typically organizing themselves in cooperatives. This awards them market powers in negotiations and allows them to obtain better prices. Usually, this market power comes with operational commitments (e.g., certain service levels, minimal amounts, ...). A sudden rise of withdrawing members can cause default on the cooperative's commitments.

Results and discussion

Mandatory exiting-rights for members are a key principle in cooperatives. Nevertheless, to participate in capital-intensive industries, cooperatives need to strike a balance between this exit-rights on one hand and the efficient allocation of financial means hence the financial stability of the cooperative in general on the other.

In industries that require less capital, the reason to allow restrictions on exit-rights are less apparent, although not inexistent. Long-term operational agreements and other elements can provide reasonable grounds to put restrictions on exit-rights in less capital-intensive cooperatives as well (reduced withdrawal contribution, waiting periods, ...).

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Cooperatives as an actor of the Social and Solidarity Economy: The Curious Case of Belgian Social Cooperatives

Presented by: Van Baelen, Bram

Authors: Van Baelen, Bram

Organisations: KU Leuven, Belgium

Background

In almost all countries, legislators and policy makers are exploring the position and potential of social enterprises and purpose-driven companies in its legal order. In Europe, the European Commission is continuing its path of empowering the social and solidarity economy throughout the different member states.

For a long time, the Belgian Company with a Social Purpose (‘vennootschap met sociaal oogmerk/société à finalité sociale’) (‘Belgian CSP’) was called as an example for other countries. The Belgian CSP, established in 1995, intrinsically owned the three characteristics of the operational definition of ‘social enterprise’, as established by the European Commission (social dimension, entrepreneurial dimension, and inclusive ownership dimension).

With the reform of Belgian Company and Association Law in 2019 and the introduction of the Belgian Companies and Associations Code (‘Belgian CCA’), the Belgian CSP was first abolished and later reinstated, however not as a separate legal form but as a label ‘recognition as social enterprise’. The most significant policy change, however, was that the label was only available for cooperatives.

The pairing of cooperatives and social enterprises has raised some challenging legal questions for social entrepreneurs and their advisors:

- (i) One of the objectives of the Belgian CCA was to strengthen the cooperative identity of Belgian cooperatives. This has been established by requiring cooperatives to identify their cooperative mission and values in their bylaws.
- (ii) Due to this strengthening and focus on ICA-principles, the climate for social enterprises has plummeted in Belgium. This fall is largely caused by legal uncertainty and lack of knowledge of the ICA-principles.

There exists confusion on the compatibility of the rather mutualistic purpose of cooperatives in general and the requirement for ‘cooperatives recognized as social enterprises’ to pursue a ‘positive material impact on people, society and planet’. Both elements are required by Belgian CCA, but weighing the different interests has been debated.

Due to a strict interpretation of the ICA-principles, governments (federal, regional, and local) have started to withdraw from existing Belgian CSP’s since the participation of governments is ‘not

compatible' (by some sources) with the cooperative values. To a less extent, the same can be said by social investors (due to the lack of knowledge on multi-stakeholder cooperatives).

This legal uncertainty has - unfortunately - created a decline in social enterprise rather than a boost.

Aims

Four years after this policy change, this paper wants to assess the impact of the new Belgian CCA on cooperatives recognized as social enterprises, and show that 'legal innovation' should be carefully designed to avoid decline rather than progression.

Methods

The paper focuses on the legal elements of the Belgian CCA and Belgian doctrine. We will assess the legal characteristics with existing laws on social enterprises and cooperatives from other EU member states. In order to have a correct legal comparison, the paper will only compare with legal systems that are similar to Belgium (e.g., in some countries, contrary to Belgium, cooperatives are the main legal form for social and solidarity economy organizations)

Results and discussion

The results of this abstract need to be further developed.

Cooperative University and New Education Policy; Focus on Multidisciplinary Education and Experiential Learning

Presented by: Verma, Sanjay Kumar

Authors: Verma, Sanjay Kumar

Organisations: National Cooperative Union of India, India

Background

Cooperative education in India is poised to make a great leap forward with the establishment of Cooperative University soon. At present, Cooperation as a subject of higher learning, has not been given due recognition in the educational syllabus. Only a few universities, most of them primarily based in South India, offer Bachelors or Masters Degree in Cooperation. These courses are not considered sought-after courses as the students keep these courses low in their priority list. The existing courses in cooperation in the higher education institutions are also not considered attractive for the students as far as employment prospects are concerned.

The New Education Policy announced recently lays emphasis on innovative ways of teaching, multidisciplinary education, and experiential learning. So, the paper analyzes the setting up of Cooperative University against the backdrop of new Education Policy so as to suggest policy perspectives.

Aims

The objectives of the paper will be following;

To analyze the formation of Cooperative University against the background of New Education Policy announced recently through an attempt to identify inter-linkages.

To assess the needs of aligning the strategic focus of the cooperative university with the New Education Policy.

To discuss how emphasis on innovative ways of teaching, multidisciplinary education, and experiential learning will provide a unique character to the cooperative university.

Methodology

As the subject is new, with non-existent literature on this subject, the methodology of the paper will be exploratory in character, based on the secondary sources.

Results and Discussions

The main thrust of the New Education Policy is to end the fragmentation of higher education by transforming higher educational institutions into large multidisciplinary universities, colleges, and Higher Education clusters/ knowledge hubs. A holistic and multi-disciplinary education would aim to develop all capacities of human beings- intellectual, social emotional and moral in an integrated

manner. The new Education Policy also lays emphasis on innovative ways of teaching through emphasis on technology and other digital modes. There is also emphasis on experiential learning, a form of service learning, as it is felt that theoretical education is of no use unless it is blended with experiential learning.

It has been found that the study on cooperatives in India does not have a multi disciplinary approach, due to which there is lack of innovation in teaching the subject of cooperatives. The diverse subjects of economics, sociology, political science, administration, law, governance, sustainable development, communications, media, public relations, history, science and technology, values and ethics, etc are all incorporated in the subject of cooperatives. They need to be treated as separate subjects with a multi-disciplinary perspective. As there is emphasis on value education in the New Education Policy, the cooperative principles and values offer a fascinating subject of study in the field of cooperatives. Similarly, study of science and technology is important as there is much emphasis on innovation in the cooperative sector.

The subject of governance in cooperatives has become very important, but it is often neglected. The subject of autonomy has become crucial for cooperatives; a multidisciplinary cooperative university would very useful for a detailed study in this area of huge significance. The study of history is totally neglected in cooperatives. Evolving a multi-disciplinary approach for the cooperative university would be to integrate all the varied aspects/ areas of cooperatives as mentioned above with the general subjects so as to lead to critical or analytical thinking which will lead to all-round development of students who study in the cooperative university.

The New Education Policy lays emphasis on experiential learning. Service learning is a form of experiential learning. The NEP emphasizes that the best practices from experiential learning comprise 'learning with doing.' The cooperative university based on experiential learning will have close interactions with the cooperative organizations. Through collaborative programs with cooperative organizations, the cooperative practitioners, experts, or mentors will take up sessions on various issues of cooperative development where the students will be provided real-life situation in the cooperative organizations, so that the students develop the skill of problem-solving.

The New Education Policy lays emphasis on setting up incubation centres. Though some of the cooperative organizations have set up Incubation Centres, but the setting up of Incubation Centre by the Cooperative University has a special significance. The Incubation Centre to be set up at the university level can act as a nodal centre for all the incubation centres set up by the cooperative organizations, as it may have all the advanced facilities including technological infrastructure to manage its operations. It may act as a hub of budding cooperative entrepreneurs, amongst the students of the university, who are passionate for a career in cooperative entrepreneurship.

Contribution and Implications

The Cooperative University, by implementing NEP with focus on multi-disciplinary approach and experiential learning, has the potential to become a Centre of Excellence. The policy-makers may give due consideration to these issues while setting up the cooperative university. The contribution of this paper, in suggesting a way to strengthen higher education in cooperatives through a cooperative university, has wide-ranging implications in strengthening the cooperative movement in the country.

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The inclusion of cooperative law at the Law Schools: Hindrances and prospects

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TITLE OF SESSION:

“The inclusion of cooperative law at the Law Schools: Hindrances and prospects”

DESCRIPTION

Name and affiliation if the participants

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4. Universitat Jaume I Proposal for developing an international project about education and training in cooperative innovation

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Motivation

It has been noted that the field of cooperative law tends to be absent or severely underrepresented in the curricula of law schools, compared to other type of organizations and companies, despite the economic and social contribution of cooperatives and their acknowledgement as sustainable development actors by international organizations, such as the International Labour Organization and the United Nations.

The absence of cooperative law as a teaching and research subject from law schools enhances the existing misconception of the cooperative model and of its particularities. Such misconception is felt not only in academic research and legal practice, but also at a judicial level and from a policy makers perspective.

Therefore, we aim to shed some light on the above matter and for this reason we wish to express our interest in organizing a session, whose participants would address the following questions:

- Is cooperative law being taught at your university compared to law on other forms of organizations and companies
- What are the reasons, if any, for the underrepresentation of cooperative law
- What is the impact of such absence or inclusion
- What instruments exist or may exist to promote the inclusion of cooperative law in the university and, if so, what have been their effects.

Content

The proposed session would aim at:

- Bringing to the fore the importance of teaching cooperative law at a university level,
- Examining the situation in different countries and from the perspective of different law professors and educators in the university level,

- Incite discussions and exchange of ideas on finding adequate measures that need to be taken in the future to address the abovementioned knowledge gap.

Format

The session will begin with a brief presentation by the participants, in which they will present the main lines and aspects linked to the content of the session from the specific perspective they have proposed (general approach to the subject, perspective from specific countries or universities, etc.).

This will be followed by a debate, which will also be open to other participants, to explore the objectives of the session in greater depth.

The session will end with the presentation of the main conclusions.

KEYWORDS

Cooperative education, law, University

THEME

Cooperative education and training

The inclusion of cooperative law at University: general perspective

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A first approach to the situation of the teaching of co-operative law in universities points to a severe under-representation, especially in comparison with other types of organisations. The consequence of this is a general lack of knowledge of co-operatives and their particularities among those who study, create and apply the law, including judges and policy makers. At the same time, a negative impact of the above is perceived in terms of inadequate policies and regulations for cooperatives, of the treatment received by economic and legal operators, etc.

In this context, this contribution attempts to address, from a general and international perspective, and as a first approach, the state of the question, considering the actual situation of the teaching of co-operative law in comparison with the regulation of other types of organisations, its reasons, its impacts and the instruments to promote the inclusion of co-operative law in universities.

In order to carry out this study, a questionnaire was drawn up for university lecturers dedicated to the study of co-operative law, with questions directly related to the issues mentioned above. This paper will present the initial conclusions of this questionnaire.

It is expected to present a new vision of the issue, with contributions relating to the mentioned questions, as well as to help identify lines of work to continue to effectively address the promotion of the inclusion of co-operative law in universities.

Legal proposals for equality of women and men in co-operatives

Presented by: Villafáñez Pérez, Itziar

Authors: Villafáñez Pérez, Itziar (1); Senent Vidal, María José (2); Rodríguez González, Amalia (3)

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Background

Cooperatives are potentially suitable for the adoption of measures to facilitate equality between women and men. Their principles and values include an explicit vocation for equality and social interest; moreover, their participatory and flexible structure could favour the presence and participation of women in them. However, it has been repeatedly noted that the economic, social and cultural environment in which cooperatives operate has a decisive influence on the maintenance of situations of inequality within them to the detriment of women. In this paper we will reflect on these inequalities and how the law can help to combat them.

Aims

The main aim of the paper is to analyse cooperative legislation from a gender perspective, detecting the elements that have been introduced in it in an attempt to correct existing discrimination within these organisations, as well as to propose different legislative instruments that could be applied.

Method

The method used will be that of the legal disciplines, consisting mainly of the comparative analysis of cooperative legislation and the results of its application, also relying on studies on the subject. It also incorporates the criteria of research from a gender perspective.

The legal basis for the study will be mainly (but not only) the abundant Spanish cooperative legislation.

Results and discussion

As a starting point, we will reflect on the concept of the cooperative, including the principles and values linked to it, in order to reveal its potential and gaps in relation to gender equality.

The obstacles encountered by women in cooperatives start with access and participation itself. Biases in job, career and corporate selection processes have been highlighted in a number of studies. Their apparent neutrality, especially in selection processes, as well as the resistance they generate, have made difficult to analyse these obstacles in depth. In particular, difficulties have been noted in accessing funding for capital contributions, as well as others arising from the lack of ownership. Specific attention will be devoted to proposals for shared ownership, not only of agricultural holdings, but also for non-heterosexual couples.

The balanced presence of women and men in representative and decision-making bodies, both in the corporate structure and in the management or technical structure, is one of the aspects that is beginning to receive greater attention from the doctrine and is finding a timid reflection in legislation. The causes of the lower presence of women in such bodies, whether collegiate or not, and access to their presidency will be the object of reflection, with a view to proposing effective measures to overcome them.

Other aspects of the organisation of cooperatives, which in some cases represent obstacles and gaps and in others opportunities and tools for equality, also need to be addressed. These include the need to promote co-responsibility in care; specific training and support; equality plans and economic planning from a gender perspective; the intersectional perspective; and gender-based violence in the social and labour sphere. Likewise, sex-disaggregated data and indicators and inclusive language and communication are necessary instruments for effective equality in cooperatives.

Contributions and implications

The expected consequence of the study is the detection of different legal instruments that may be useful or necessary to achieve gender equality in cooperatives.

Thus, it is hoped to be able to present conclusions on the legal measures that may be most effective in tackling inequalities in the aforementioned areas, such as the incorporation of women as members in cooperatives, participation in decision-making bodies, reconciliation with family life and co-responsibility, and gender-based violence.

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Emerging actor roles in the diffusion of renewable energy communities: the case of Austria

Presented by: Vogler, Andrea

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Earlier work has shown that renewable energy communities, as forms of social innovation (Dall-Orsoletta et al., 2022), have the potential to contribute to sustainability transitions in the energy system (Caramizaru et al., 2020; Dóci et al., 2015) and to serve as drivers of sustainable development (Otamendi-Irizar et al., 2022). In line with these findings, the European Union has assigned these new energy actors a prominent role in its 'Clean-Energy-For-all-Europeans-Package' by expecting them to actively contribute to ecological, social and economic goals to advance the energy transition (European Commission. Directorate General for Energy., 2019). Against this background, energy communities may enter a new era of wide-scale diffusion. However, it is currently undetermined how actors implement renewable energy communities in practice. While some actors may aim to act as systems entrepreneurs (Schlaile et al., 2021), to include local citizens' interests (Boon & Dieperink, 2014), and to internalize environmental and social impacts in their economic activities (Novkovic, 2008), other studies show that economic goals can dominate energy cooperatives (Reiner et al., 2014). Although financial benefits are an important driver that have the potential to transform energy systems (Dóci et al., 2015), the varying goals in the diffusion of energy communities may impact their transformative character. Most research has neglected this change of former niche phenomena in a mainstreaming process (Wittmayer et al., 2021) and imputed 'transformative goals' to actors in energy communities. With the present study, we aim to increase the current understanding of how individual actors in and around energy communities interpret and enact their roles in the energy transition. We study the case of Austria, where only recently, legislative changes enabled the formation of renewable energy communities. Since then, over 90 energy communities have been established (status of October 2022; E-Control, 2022), marking a current diffusion process. Beyond extensive desk research, we build on participant observations in four community meetings in fall 2022, twelve in-depth interviews with actors in energy communities and intermediary actors. More concretely, we ask for the expectations raised towards renewable energy communities from different stakeholders' perspectives, for the practices enacted by these actors, and for the (material, social, and symbolic) resources available to them. Taking a discourse-theoretical approach (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999), we adopt a critical-realist perspective to understand the potential effect these actors have in the energy transition. Our findings challenge the taken-for-granted assumptions and contribute to recent calls to provide a more nuanced understanding of energy community actors' roles in the energy transition (Biely et al., 2022). Moreover, our study of constructing roles in the current formation process of energy communities provides a basis for understanding subsequent adoptions or adaptations of actor roles in energy cooperatives.

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A systematic literature review on HRM in co-operatives

Presented by: Voigt, Ludger

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Background

Co-operatives, as democratic organizations owned and controlled by members, pose particular challenges for human resource management (HRM) by considering on the one hand, members and member employees, and on the other hand, non-member employees who are excluded from ownership and (mostly) decision making. Following the call for reviews related to co-operative organizations (Jussila, 2013), Höhler and Köhl (2018) have undertaken a literature review on member heterogeneity in co-operatives. Further, Saz-Gil et al. (2021) reviewed the literature on co-operatives and social capital, while Belte (2021) focused on HRM in hybrid organizations. Although, co-operatives provide an ideal context to specify HRM, the literature on HRM in co-operatives still remains fragmented.

Aims

Our aim is to analyse the existing research on HRM in co-operatives in a systematic manner by providing a deeper and more comprehensive understanding on HRM strategies and practices. Further, we aim to shed light on important avenues for future research. To the best of our knowledge, this review is the first attempt to identify and present literature related to HRM in co-operatives in a systematic way.

Methods

Following the salient method of systematic literature review (Tranfield et al., 2003), the article identification involved three phases. First, we conducted a keyword search using a combination of co-operatives and HRM terms such as 'co-operative/cooperative/coop/co-op/member-owned/employee-owned/mutual/employee ownership/member ownership' AND 'HRM/human capital/human resource/personnel management' in electronic databases of EBSCO Business Source Premier, Elsevier Scopus, JSTOR, SAGE Publishing, the Taylor & Francis Online Journal Library and the Wiley Online Library. To identify the most relevant studies, we limited our keyword search to the article title, abstract, and keywords. Further, we focussed on articles with business, management, and social science relation. We selected a time period of 11 years from 2012 to 2022 starting with the International Year of Co-operatives[1]. To ensure scientific quality, we focussed on peer-reviewed articles published in English. After the abstract screening, we identified 78 potentially relevant articles. In the second phase, we subjected these articles to a full-text analysis, resulting in a sample of 24 articles. In the third phase, we scanned the reference list of these articles to identify additional articles which were not covered by the automatic keyword search. Therefore, we used the same selection criteria as in the first and second phase, including 11 further appropriate articles. In total, the final sample included 35 articles.

Results and discussion

Almost half of the articles (n=17) were published in the last three years (2020-2022), showing a clear increase in research on HRM in co-operatives. Surprisingly, less than 10% (n=3) of the identified articles were published in HRM journals, while the journal *ILR Review* showed the highest concentration with three articles. Based on co-operative principles and values, the social dimension (Novkovic, 2008) influences HRM strategies and practices. For example, in economic crisis co-operatives take measures of employment stabilisation, such as flexibility in rewards and working hours, to protect their human capital. Our results indicate that the understanding of HRM in co-operatives goes beyond the strategies and practices inside the organization, expanding the dyad of member employees and non-member employees to institutions and stakeholders in region and local community.

Contributions and implications

Our study contributes to the literature in two ways. First, we present the current literature on HRM in co-operatives in a systematic matter and identify areas for future research. Second, we contribute to socially responsible HRM (Omid & Dal Zotto 2022), sustainable HRM (Kramar, 2014) and Common Good HRM (Aust et al., 2020), adding specified HRM strategies and practices in co-operatives. Relying on the duality of economic and non-economic aims, and based on specific their principles and values, co-operatives do not only constitute an ideal context to explore HRM in more a socially responsible and sustainable way, while simultaneously insights available on how to develop these approaches of HRM. In practical terms, our results provide guidelines to handle the difference of member and non-member employees in co-operatives as well as possibilities to tackle crisis and contribute to sustainable development.

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The behavioral perspective of farmers on the revival of agricultural cooperatives in Uganda.

Presented by: Wakaabu, Dirisa

Authors: Wakaabu, Dirisa (1,2)

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Background

Agricultural cooperatives in Uganda have evolved from state-controlled and politically oriented institutions to liberal farmer-controlled, autonomous, and democratic institutions which have had lapses of collapse and revival (Nimusiima et al., 2021; Wedig, 2019). Wedig & Wiegatz (2017) and Kwapong & Korugyendo, (2010) argue that they collapsed due to internal factors (mismanagement, distrust, and poor leadership) and external factors such as policy changes, and political instability in the 1980s.

Uganda Cooperative Alliance later adopted a tripartite system to revive the cooperatives with the support of the liberal policy reforms recommended by the World Bank in 1990. The new institutional structure included; the Rural Producer Organisations (RPO), the Area Cooperative Enterprises (ACE) as an amalgamation of RPOs, and saving and credit cooperation (SACCO) as a credit facility. (Kwapong & Korugyendo, 2010; UCA, 2010). The adoption of this model and its policy integration has enormously affected the behavior of farmers as an output of policy compliance (Howlett et al., 2020).

Aims

Using the concept of behavioral factors suggested by Dessart et al. (2019), the study investigates the compliance of farmers to the revival of cooperatives and to understand factors affecting farmers' participation in agricultural cooperatives.

Methods

With an interpretive ontology and epistemology and with consideration that cooperative members are owners and users of the cooperatives, and therefore, their interaction constitutes the institution itself (Wagenaar, 2015). Thus, I engaged farmers through semi-structured interviews and did qualitative content analysis according to Mayring's (2014) using MAXQDA 2022 version.

Results and Discussion

Opposed to Dessart et al. (2019) findings the behavioral factors influence participation in the order of (1) social factors (2) dispositional factors, (3) cognitive factors, and (4) external factors from the most proximal to the distal factor respectively.

Dispositional factors: Dispositional factors represent "an individual's propensity to behave a certain way" (Malle, 2011) thus farmers' propensity to participate in cooperatives. They were the most proximal factors influenced by the farmer's farming objectives, personality, social and economic concerns, resistance to change, and risk tolerance of the farmer respectively. Farmers engaged in commercial production seeking new experiences, with an assertive personality, and an intent to

exploit economies of scale offered by the cooperatives were more likely to participate in cooperatives. On the other hand, Conscientious and neurotic farmers based on their experience or that of their predecessors who accrued losses from the collapse of cooperatives were more resistant to participation (Nimusiima et al., 2021; Action aid, 2013).

Social factors: Social factors are relatively proximal and categorized into descriptive and injunctive norms, signaling motives, and trust respectively. According to Xu et al, (2019), cooperatives are inherently social institutions highly influenced by the interpersonal, cultural, and political relationships within the community. Descriptive norms are highly influenced by neighboring farmers' experiences and achievements leading to trust in the institution (Sok et al., 2016) while the latter is when farmers seek social approval.

Cognitive factors: Background knowledge about cooperatives, the perceived costs and benefits, and the risks associated with participation in cooperatives are distal to farmers' participation in cooperatives. The perceived costs like membership fees, fines, delayed sales, and access to finances equally deter members whereas benefits like access to credit, better prices, and training on better practices worked in the opposite direction (Nimusiima et al., 2021). Lastly, other factors; advocacy, quality improvement, and external support contributed the least to farmers' participation in cooperatives.

Contribution and implications

Cooperatives are fundamental institutions in agricultural and rural development with a remarkable potential of improving the livelihoods of farmers in Uganda. The low farmer participation and commitment are a result of policy changes requiring urgent action (Action aid 2013). There is a need to invest in mindset training and capacity building of farmers by actors to change the misconceptions and negative perceptions about cooperatives. As suggested by Desert et al (2019), influencing the cognitive factors will cascade into other behavioral factors and farmers' participation.

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Interaction of performance indicators of agricultural cooperatives. A case study of Uganda

Presented by: Wakaabu, Dirisa

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Introduction

Agricultural cooperatives (ACs) play a crucial role in the agricultural sector and provide benefits to their members such as access to inputs, machinery, markets, and credit facilities. Unlike other cooperatives, the ACs are highly affected by seasonality, inelasticity of agri-food, and the variation of quality and yield are influenced by weather, environment, pest, and diseases (Grimm et al., 2014). The performance of ACs was traditionally measured by financial and economic indicators such as prices, efficiency and financial growth, and social indicators. However, in recent times, the adoption of environmental indicators as a measure of sustainability has gained traction (Deng et al., 2021).

In Uganda, the adoption of the Integrated Cooperative Model (ICM) improved the financial services and production potential of ACs members (Kwapang, 2010). The performance of ACs is a topic of contention as to which indicators to use, the divide is between those who adhere to the ACs' goals and those who argue that the goals are measured by operations. Economic performance measures include returns on assets, growth of sales, and credit provision, while social performance measures include training for members and community services and the use of environmental indicators is still limited adoption of eco-friendly practices. (Aboah et al., 2022).

This paper identifies the indicators used to measure the different performance criteria of ACs and understand the interaction of ACs' performance criteria in Uganda under three scenarios - sustainability, middle of the road, and inequality - as part of the shared socio-economic pathways (SSPs).

Methodology

The study was conducted through a combination of a literature review and a focus group discussion with ACs leadership and agricultural experts working with development organizations. The three selected SSP scenarios include "Taking the green road" (SSP1), which prioritizes sustainability and reduces income inequalities, and overall energy and resource consumption. "Middle of the road" (SSP2), where social, economic, and technological trends continue without significant deviation posing challenges to reducing vulnerability to social and environmental change. "A road divided" (SSP4), where unequal investment leads to inequality and stratification, and inadequate access to basic needs like water, sanitation, and healthcare for the poor (O'Neil et al., 2015).

The content analysis of the focus group discussion transcript resulted in a code system consisting of four categories: Economic performance, social performance, environmental performance, and

external influences consisting of 30 codes and 10 subcodes. The transcript was first transcribed and speaker names were anonymized to protect the participants. The analysis was performed by two researchers to ensure intercoder reliability and the findings were confirmed with the participants for validation.

Results

The literature suggested three performance criteria of cooperatives are measured economically using indicators; returns on sale, sales, and equity, socially using outreach and inclusion, client benefit and welfare, and social performance and governance. Environmentally the indicators were the adoption of eco-friendly practices and compliance with national environmental standards. The three criteria and other external influences like government policies, development intervention by Non-government organizations, and government, and corruption are critical to their performance as shared by participants in the focus group discussion.

In Uganda, the performance of cooperatives is an outcome of leadership, advocacy, government interventions, partnerships, livelihoods, and sustainable agricultural practices. Firstly, to foster good leadership in cooperatives there is a need for training and capacity-building for leaders and partnerships with different stakeholders. Inclusivity, transparency, engaging women in leadership, and proper accountability to avoid conflicts and mistrust which were identified as the major cause of ACs collapses.

Secondly, a cooperative's access to finance and markets increase agricultural production when and if coupled with value addition and better market prices. There are potential benefits of supporting farmers who adopt sustainable farming practices using tools such as market segregation, and premiums to compensate for the trade-offs of adopting these practices.

Lastly, most cooperatives operate under the inequality scenarios (SSP2) in the middle of the road and (SSP4) in the road divided. To improve this toward (SSP1) taking the green road, government policies, and interventions, as well as efforts by development partners and private companies, are necessary to regulate and streamline sustainability in environmental practice, human capital, economic investments, and markets. Few companies and organizations working with ACs dealing in cash crops like coffee and cocoa have introduced sustainability payments, however, this should be passed to all agricultural enterprises.

Conclusion

Agricultural cooperatives' rate of collapse among developing countries is relatively high especially due to the failure of periodic monitoring of their performance "health check". For instance, in Uganda, even with its history of cooperative failure, farmers, the government, NGOs, and the private sector are still starting cooperatives, but only a few are profitable and improve members' livelihoods leading to them being abandoned.

Finally, In terms of sustainable agricultural practices, balancing government programs focused on the commercialization of agriculture and access to environmentally friendly inputs, and capacity-building for farmers, especially women, to adopt climate-smart, and eco-friendly practices. Further studies on the possibility of sustainability indicators being measured by cooperatives in all agricultural enterprises.

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The Role of Cooperatives in a Sustainable Transition

Presented by: Warren, Jerome Nikolai

Authors: Warren, Jerome Nikolai

Organisations: Academie Royale de Belgique, Germany

The question of a sustainable transition is a significant one, perhaps the most significant one to face human societies in recorded history. Thus, it is no wonder that an increasing amount of academic research is being conducted in this domain. From calls for a new “raison d’etre” of the firm (Philippe De Woote) to new pledges like the Business Roundtable and the Global Pact, the intertwining of social and ecological transition(s) is occurring at an accelerating rate. However, data analysis shows that the connection to cooperatives and principles-based enterprises is less robust. Moreover, an ongoing research project conducted with several Belgian research Universities has demonstrated that much of the research in this area remains fragmented.

In this talk, it would be my argument that cooperatives, as defined by the ICA Principles and Values, can act as a tool to integrate the dual notions of sustainable transition. In particular, I would argue they can do this due to the nature of their hierarchies, which are, as long as they follow the ICA Principles and Values, accountable, inclusive and equitable. This follows the themes of much of my work at the Academie Royale de Belgique as Chaire SFPI.

The key themes of this argument are the following: if we wish to form a sustainable future, a “mission economy” framing and a framing of the outer and inner limits of the economic order, a la “donut economics” are necessary. However, where such frameworks are lacking is the explicit integration of the role of the enterprise. Thus, such perspectives, and most economic analysis, do not explicitly consider the non-linear discontinuities involved in the agency experienced or enacted in transactions 1) individually or in groups and 2) within organizational networks.

The main point of the talk would be that, if such a framing matters, then issues like the nature of hierarchy matter. This matters, as the social dimensions of the firm matter for issues of sustainability. Besides simply being sites of profit-making activity, firms also enable stakeholders like workers to develop what Isabelle Ferreras has called “expressive rationality”. This and other rationalities are part of the firm’s “economy of esteem” and can contribute to a sustainable agenda by substituting more sustainable for less sustainable organizational and individual logics and processes.

I would describe a number of contexts in which this research agenda applies. This includes notions of disalienation and agency, as well as being relevant in events like firm trade sales and the construction of a globalized economy based on the principle of “just in time” production and distribution. It will be argued that one future way to generate so-called “cooperative rents”, which occur without the introduction of further capital expenditures, can be generated by so-called internalization, that is, embedding the external ecosystem or environment into the (inter)organizational decision-making and execution process. This notion of internalization is connected to the idea of “multi-stakeholding”.

The talk would finally attempt to make clear how these ideas connect with cooperatives, or, rather, how cooperatives can be considered examples of such processes of “disalienation” and “internalization” and what role the “economy of esteem” within cooperatives can play in generating the conditions of a just and sustainable transition of the economy, considering the constraints the perspectives proposed by Mazzucato and Raworth impose. The conclusion will be that, in order to be fully implementable, a “mission” or “donut” economy framing must incorporate a firm-level approach.

Outlining a “Cooperative Economics” Curriculum

Presented by: Warren, Jerome Nikolai

Authors: Warren, Jerome Nikolai (1); Biggiero, Lucio (2); Vicari, Sara (3); Hubner, Jamin (4); Ogunyemi, Kemi (5)

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While a number of isolated books have appeared in recent years with titles like “Cooperative Economics”, there has been no decided attempt to develop a distinct “cooperative economics” paradigm since the 1950s, when the Yugoslav model interested numerous scholars internationally and the Ward-Domar-Vanek model attempted to apply neoclassical framing towards studying cooperatives, no robust paradigm of cooperative economics has developed to the present. Thus, the panelists wish to present a new paradigm currently in development, among others via a Handbook of Cooperative Economics. This paradigm distinguishes itself from mainstream economics in a number of ways.

The first way Cooperative Economics distinguishes itself is its abandonment of the Utilitarian framework of utility-maximization. Even if we restrict ourselves to individual agency, we find that stakeholders invest in organizations for reasons beyond monetary return. Part of this can be described via notions like “expressive rationality” and part of it via capabilities. Of course, the idea of capabilities can be scaled to the collective level, which introduces the second distinction, which is complexity. In a complex world with significant volatility, cooperation can be a tool to benefit all agents cooperating. Another related distinction is the centrality of networks. In particular, Cooperative Economics seeks to outline how organizations based on certain principles can build up networks over time that can create advantages for the totality of the network. This includes reducing volatility and extends to enabling entirely new organizational agendas.

The panelists would outline 4 points: firstly, how the neoclassical paradigm is totally unsuited to discussing the issues of importance for cooperation generally and specifically in the sense of the ICA principles – also emphasizing the lack of mention of cooperatives within the mainstream curriculum. Secondly, reviewing notions of “capabilities”, “expressive rationality” and “collective capabilities” (including collective entrepreneurship) that are central to robust or “consummate” cooperation, including issues of “social imaginaries”, as facilitated by multimedia. Thirdly, issues of complexity and how organizations based on certain principles (like democracy) can navigate such issues. Fourthly, why it is important that any “cooperative economics” embrace network approaches to researching issues. This includes both social network analysis, as well as certain ethical or ontological approaches from the Global South, such as “Ubuntu”.

In the end, we argue that, just as people like Hagen Henry and Antonio Fici have clearly outlined a research agenda of “cooperative law”, a concurrent paradigm of “cooperative economics” is needed. We hope our panel can provide a useful sketch to begin this discussion.

The Single Origin Constraint in Cooperatives: Bias, Governance, and Competition

Presented by: Wei, Anyan

Authors: Wei, Anyan; Hendrikse, George

Organisations: Erasmus University Rotterdam, Netherlands, The

Background

Two important dimensions of an organizational design are the organization's goals and its strategy (Burton, e.a., 2021). Important for understanding the goals of a that it consists of a society of members and an enterprise, where the former owns the latter. Our focus is a supply chain cooperative, where the cooperative enterprise is owned by either the sellers of an input, or the buyers of an output. This identity of the owner, i.e. the enterprise is owned by a party in an adjacent stage in the supply chain, is expected to have an impact on the choice of strategy behavior of the cooperative enterprise.

Each member in the society of members of a supply chain cooperative has strong ties to his stage in the supply chain. For example, a farmer in an agricultural cooperative has strong ties to assets such as the farm, land, expertise, and experience. These ties may inhibit the adaptation to new opportunities and trends. Cook (1997) labels this as the single origin constraint and argues that this characteristic is the reason agricultural cooperatives have fallen behind in the globalization process, i.e. the single origin constraint may be disadvantageous to cooperatives. Another feature of a member is that decisions have to be made in a complex environment, where knowledge may be required regarding plant and animal genetics, logistics, IT, finance, operations, and the market. Inevitable this knowledge is incomplete and each member will have a focus due to his background, education, and interests where knowledge is required.

Our aim is to operationalize the impact of the single origin constraint on the choice of investment of a cooperative enterprise in a complex environment and determine the circumstances when an enterprise owned by a party in an adjacent stage in the supply chain creates more value than other ownership structures (Hart and Moore, 1990). The framework of multidimensional (MD) reasoning (Arad and Rubinstein, 2019) allows us to capture the complexity of the environment and to determine the impact of focus in terms of the single origin constraint on the investment decisions of the cooperative enterprise. An advantage of an analysis in terms of MD reasoning is that it allows to determine biases in decision making endogenously. The analysis is extended to competitive settings in order to determine the value of the single origin constraint as a commitment device (Fershtman and Kalai, 1993) and to study the impact of local information.

Aims

The objective of this study is to formulate the behavioral implication of the single origin constraint for cooperatives from a cognition perspective.

Model

This paper formulates a game-theoretic model capturing that a decision maker reduces the complexity of a problem by categorizing all the strategies in a limited number of sets, i.e., cells (Arad and Rubinstein, 2019). An essential step in adopting the MD equilibrium is producing an edited version of the original game. In order to accomplish this, the strategies of the players must be divided into a number of categories based on the nature of the game, and the players must then make choices in each category based on a predicted profile of characteristics rather than actual strategies. They choose a strategy that includes every one of the desired characteristics after deciding on those characteristics. The specification of the characteristics is driven by the single origin constraint in our model. We extend the model to a competitive setting in order to determine the value of the single origin constraint as a commitment device and investigate the robustness of the results by considering also local information.

Results and discussion

We analyze the impact of categorization in a supply chain consisting of a farmer and a processor on the investment decision of these players. The governance structures cooperative and investor-owned firm (IOF) are compared. We show that the resulting MD equilibrium differs from the standard Nash equilibrium and that bias arises endogenously by the categorization. It accounts for the observation by Cook (1997) that the single origin constraint influences decision making and ultimately affects organizational performance.

Contributions and implications

This study adds to the literature by investigating the impact of the single origin constraint on decision making and overall performance from a MD reasoning perspective, which allows for a more realistic representation of players' limited cognitive capacity and the complexity of decision-making.

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Enacting cooperative governance in the digital era

Presented by: Westh Nicolajsen, Hanne

Authors: Westh Nicolajsen, Hanne; Baka, Vasiliki; Nielsen, Lene

Organisations: IT University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Background & research purpose

The cooperative model is known for its resilience and objective that prioritizes the common needs of their members, rather than returns for shareholders. The governance model follows a value-driven logic and a democratic structure, in that decision making is based on the “one person - one vote” principle. Under this umbrella, employee-owned businesses (EOBs) are organizations where the employees own and manage the company. Like other types of cooperatives, they are value driven, member owned, and democratically controlled organizations; principles that explain why EOBs have been economically sound and more resilient to crisis, such as Covid, compared to other types of organizations.

Such crises along with an ever-increasing technological adoption has intensified the use of virtual forms of collaboration (Cheney et al., 2014) and digitalization processes by EOBs (Parli, 2022). Emergent technologies have indeed expanded the possibilities for “more direct, interactive and democratic forms” of communication and governance (Rothschild, 2009). In response to a general call for further research investigating how cooperative businesses react to developing or implementing new technologies (e.g., Camargo Benavides & Ehrenhard, 2021), our study-in-progress provides insights into different governance structures and discusses the twofold nature of technology acting as both an enabler and restrictor when practicing cooperative governance.

Methods

This paper is based on semi-structured, qualitative interviews with 14 employee-owners in eight employee-owned start-ups covering a wide spectrum of entrepreneurial activity ranging from consultancy to software development, art restoration, retail, logistics and construction. The interviews lasted between 50-120 minutes and were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. For this paper we focus on thematic areas revolving around governance structures and the use of digital tools.

Results

Enacting governance: All start-ups in our study follow their own governing schemes, mostly organized in the form of committees and roles. These committees coordinate daily tasks and decisions in regular (online) meetings where strategic decisions are discussed and decided upon. Many of the cooperatives also arrange annual trips to discuss their desired future. While some do work within clearly defined job titles, others have “functions” or “roles”, that cover different areas, (e.g., daily management). A very crucial area prioritized by six of the eight start-ups is this of “wellbeing”. Allocation of roles happens mostly based on skills and availability but is also motivated by desire to learn and develop. Employee-owned start-ups in our study perceive the structures in place (such as meetings) as forums for enacting democracy and inclusion. Yet, rules for participation as well as

voting and consensus procedures differ substantially, with the use of technology becoming increasingly prominent.

Digital tools for governance: Collaboration materializes with the use of digital tools that enable both virtual and physical arrangements. Some of the employee-owned start-ups are loosely bound by virtual collaboration, while others are closely knitted together through a complex hybrid communication structure. An interesting observation was how the use of digital tools has been associated with strong values. An example is a consulting employee-owned start-up that exclusively uses open-source tools. Another employee-owned start-up has created a strict structure that separates work from private communication. Members have channels on different platforms for client communication, physical meeting agendas, updates on interesting issues, individual communication, and closed channels for specific issues. Similarly, an art restoration employee-owned start-up has divided discussions between Messenger and Slack, depending on how fast an answer needs to be given. In general employee-owned start-ups emphasize the difficulty in finding digital tools that allow for separation between private and company life, as no single tool or platform can entirely support the need for cooperative governance, flexibility, division of work and transparency. Thus, the adopted technologies both enable and restrict cooperative governance to various degrees.

Discussion & conclusion

This study explores how governance is enacted in employee-owned start-ups with an emphasis on emergent technologies and platforms. We find that start-ups act as ambassadors of democratic and responsible businesses emphasizing job security and wellbeing. In accordance with findings suggested by Wren (2020) and Kaswan (2014), they use committees, shifting roles for governance, and meetings for decision making with various demands to participation. Interestingly, six cooperatives have committees on wellbeing looking into how to navigate workload and avoid stress (with the use of technology). The cooperative values are seen as aligned with open-source technologies. This creates a value conflict in some of the start-ups when they do not find the right open-source tools. All start-ups strive to find the right technologies supporting transparency and knowledge sharing for communication and coordination. In practice, such an endeavor turns out to be both liberating and constraining with interesting implications in relation to the broader role of technology in this unique organizational form.

Camargo Benavides and Ehrenhard (2011) argue that there is a lack of knowledge on how new technologies are used in these organizations. Our study contributes with insights into different governance structures in the Danish landscape, and a discussion of the twofold nature of technology, acting as both enabler and restrictor when practicing cooperative governance. We argue that there is a need for best practices as well as technologies to better support the governance needs in EOBs, an analytical theme that we will explore further in the future.

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Innovating for the Common Good: An Analysis of Institutional Mechanisms Impacting Social Innovation in Brazilian Credit Unions

Presented by: Zago, Matheus Jones

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Organisations: 1: University of Würzburg (JMU), Germany; 2: University of São Paulo (USP), Brazil; 3: São Paulo State University (UNESP), Brazil

Background: The notion of social innovation is broad, with the first records dating back to the 1960s, but, in recent years, the term has received increasing attention. The concept derives from debates popularized by economist Joseph Schumpeter, who applied his theory of innovation to explain the introduction of new technology, or forms of organization capable of changing the economic structure of a society. According to Schumpeter (1934), innovation is a process that disrupts existing industries and leads to the establishment of new ones. Recently, the debate on social innovation has expanded this idea by bringing innovation as a way to address social and economic problems. In this context, it is generally used to address the development of innovative solutions to address social challenges, with benefits shared among society (Tracey & Stott, 2016), promoting the common good. While there is a consensus on its importance, there is intense debate around a more precise definition and use of social innovation. This is due to the numerous definitions that exist, based on the empirical evidence analyzed (Lee, Spanjol & Sun, 2019), and how social innovation distinguishes itself from commercial innovations. Some authors believe that social innovation is simply a continuation of commercial innovations, while others believe it to have a unique motivation and objective.

Understanding the differences between social and commercial innovation and the role of institutions in supporting social innovation is crucial for developing effective policies and practices to address social challenges. Research on social innovation has been developed in the international context, with a focus on social cooperatives (Campopiano & Bassani, 2021), agricultural cooperatives (Parrilla-González & Ortega-Alonso, 2021), entrepreneur cooperatives (Kassim et al., 2022), among others. However, the discussion in the Global South context is still incipient, especially for Brazilian credit unions, which operate under the cooperative national law (Law no. 5,764).

Aim: The objective of this study is to identify the formal and informal institutional mechanisms that encourage or inhibit the implementation of social innovation and the creation of civic wealth in Brazilian credit unions.

Methods: This study adopts a qualitative approach based on case studies of successful credit unions in generating social innovation. Data collection stems from semi-structured interviews with managers from central and singular credit unions in Brazil. Participants were selected using the "snowball technique" (Cassell et al., 2018), where researchers identified a small group of managers and then, based on their recommendations, found more participants for the study. After each interview, relevant reports and documents from the organizations were consulted to verify and deepen the understanding of mechanisms that influence or inhibit social innovation and its impact on the community. It should be noted that qualitative studies or surveys with multiple respondents

that include interviews with stakeholders involved in credit unions can offer a more nuanced perspective on social innovation to develop new frameworks that theorize this phenomenon (Helm & Andersson, 2010).

Results and discussion: Our initial investigation indicates that the regulatory environment, access to financing sources, organizational culture, and knowledge and skills are important mechanisms for the success of social innovations in the realm of Brazilian credit unions. Another aspect highlighted by our results is the importance of community participation in implementing social innovation, as they are more likely to be successful when there is collaboration among the actors involved. Moreover, the results point to the differences between social and commercial innovations, for example, the role of social projects in these cooperatives. Social and commercial innovations differ in their motivations, goals, and target audiences. While commercial innovations aim to provide member values and are primarily focused on satisfying member needs, social innovations aim to address social issues and improve the well-being of communities. As the literature indicates, the discussion is still at an early stage, especially in the context of Brazilian credit unions, in contrast to what has already been discussed in social, agricultural and entrepreneurial cooperatives.

Contributions and implications: This study extends knowledge about the institutional mechanisms that influence the implementation of social innovation and the generation of civic wealth in credit unions. It is important to highlight that concrete examples of social innovation in Brazilian credit unions have not been widely discussed in peer-reviewed journals. Therefore, the analysis and selection of empirical cases in this study will also contribute to broadening the discussion and disseminating practical examples of success in social innovation. Furthermore, the results of this study can be used as a guide for future projects and actions, not only in credit unions, but also for other actors and researchers interested in promoting social innovation in a broader sense.

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Determinants of the capital structure of Brazilian credit unions: Impacts of the COVID-19 Crisis

Presented by: Zancan, Flávia

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Organisations: 1: University of Sao Paulo, Brazil; 2: University of Würzburg, Germany

Background: The COVID-19 pandemic was the biggest pandemic since the Spanish flu. Initiated in the productive sphere, it impacted the financial and credit markets, being considered of a different nature from the crises usually observed in capitalism, even so it provides the opportunity to understand the impact on the capital structure of banks, as well as to evaluate the behavior of the main theories about the theme, namely, Trade-Off (TTO) and Pecking Order (TPO). In times of crisis, it was believed that regulations, such as the Basel Accords, were sufficient to maintain the balance of financial institutions, being considered as the main determinants. However, in practice, these institutions assume more conservative postures when compared to the minimum level required by regulators. The evolution of knowledge on the subject made it possible to identify determinants that influence the capital structure of financial institutions, but little space was obtained by credit unions, which are financial institutions with their own characteristics in relation to commercial banks.

Aim: Analyze the main determinants of the capital structure of Brazilian credit unions in the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to TTO and TPO.

Method: The population of 871 credit unions that operated in Brazil from 2016 to 2020 was analyzed, totaling 7713 observations, according to data available on the Central Bank of Brazil website, updated by the IGP-M inflation, for 2020. As dependent variables, there are the total debt (ET) and the total debt on equity (ETPL). As independent variables, there are: profitability (PROF); growth opportunity (GOP); liquidity (LIQ); size (SIZE); tangibility (TANG) and deposits (DEP). From this perspective, the hypotheses of the study are proposed. According to TPO (H1) there is a negative relationship between PROF (H1a), positive with GOP (H1b) and negative with LIQ (H1c) with the use of debt. Alternatively, TTO (H2) addresses a positive relationship between SIZE (H2a), positive TANG (H2b) and positive relationship between DEP (H2c) and the use of debt. On the panel data, a variable was built identifying the general semesters (PG: 2016-2020), the semesters before the pandemic (P1: 2016-2019) and the pandemic semesters (P2: 2020). The model was estimated by Stacked Ordinary Least Squares.

Results and discussion: The results indicate that PROF has a negative and significant relationship with ET and ETPL in all analyzed periods, corroborating with H1a. Gropp and Heider (2010) also find the same relationship, thus more profitable institutions use more internal resources in carrying out investments, following the TPO. The GOP showed a positive and significant relationship for the ET, in the year 2020 and other periods. Result similar to ETPL for the pandemic period (P2), confirming H1b. For Lim (2012) the greater growth opportunity may indicate greater demand for capital, according to

the TPO. LIQ showed a negative and significant relationship only in ET, in the pandemic period (P2), corroborating with H1c. For Bastos and Nakamura (2009), the greater financial slack provides the use of internally generated funds, corroborating the TPO.

For SIZE, a positive and significant relationship was identified in ET for PG, PI and P2 and for PG and P2 in ETPL, confirming H2a. For Oliveira and Raposo (2021), larger institutions are better diversified and have a lower probability of being in financial distress, following the TTO. TANG has a negative influence, not being in accordance with the expected sign (H2b), the negative relationship may be associated with the fact that credit unions resort to indebtedness using intangible assets as collateral. The DEP present a positive and significant relationship for the ET and the ETPL in PG, PI and P2, confirming the H2c. According to Vieira, Arruda and Tavares (2016), the more deposits received, the more likely the bank is to raise funds and the greater the indebtedness, according to TTO.

In general, the variables PROF, GOP, SIZE and DEP were consistent with regard to the relationship expected by the study's hypotheses, considering the crisis period. On the other hand, the LIQ showed the relationship expected by the study hypothesis only in the crisis for the ET.

Contributions and implications: The capital structure is one of the most relevant topics in corporate finance and when analyzing the main determinants of the capital structure of Brazilian credit unions, it can be confirmed, through the estimation of the regression model, that the greater the use of debt, the greater the growth opportunity (H1b), size (H2a) and deposits (H2c). On the other hand, the higher the debt, the lower the profitability (H1a) and liquidity (H1c) in the period of COVID-19. Still, most of the variables confirm the TPO as valid for Brazilian credit unions. Thus, credit unions must analyze their determinants to change or not their management strategy, as financing and investment decisions must be aligned with future operational strategies, and good management is essential for business continuity.

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