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ECONOMY VENTURES:
THEORY AND REALITY IN THE CONTEXT
OF SELECTIVE GARBAGE COLLECTION**

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DE ECONOMIA SOLIDÁRIA: TEORIA E REALIDADE NO
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ABSTRACT

The gap in this research is related to the identification of the successful elements that govern the actions and activities of solidary enterprises, in parallel with what has already been proposed in the literature, using selective garbage collection cooperatives and associations as a basis. Thus, the question of this research questioned whether cooperatives and associations of selective garbage collection present elements of success due to the integral observation of the basic principles proposed for projects with solidary characteristics, already proposed in the literature. The objective points to the investigation of the guiding principles of solidary enterprises and their comparison with the perceived success elements. Therefore, this research is characterized as being of an applied, exploratory, and descriptive nature, with a qualitative approach, whose field of study involved fifteen associations and cooperatives located in the fifteen municipalities of Paraná bathed by the reservoir of the Itaipu Hydroelectric Plant, in the western region of the state. Fifteen interviews were carried out, and from the content analysis, with the help of the Iramuteq software, it was possible to diagnose the regional reality and prove that these projects are not supported by the basic principles proposed by the literature on solidarity projects, but their true elements of success point to formalization, public policies, interpersonal relationships, production, leadership, popular support, and financial security. This research showed that the theoretical principles proposed for the effective characterization of solidary economy enterprises are, at least in this region and in this context, being replaced and considerably rooted by new elements of success.

Keywords: Self-management. Heteromanagement. Solidarity economy. Waste. Cooperativism.

RESUMO

A lacuna desta pesquisa se relaciona com a identificação dos elementos de sucesso que regem as ações e atividades dos empreendimentos solidários, em paralelo com o que já fora proposto pela literatura, utilizando-se como base as cooperativas e associações de coleta seletiva de lixo. Assim, a pergunta desta pesquisa questionou se as cooperativas e associações de coleta seletiva de lixo apresentam elementos de sucesso em razão da observação integral dos princípios básicos propostos para empreendimentos de características solidárias, já propostos pela literatura. O objetivo aponta para a investigação dos princípios norteadores dos empreendimentos solidários e sua comparação com os elementos de sucesso percebidos. Logo, esta pesquisa se caracteriza como sendo de natureza aplicada, exploratória e descritiva, com abordagem qualitativa, cujo campo de estudo envolveu quinze associações e cooperativas localizadas nos quinze municípios paranaenses banhados pelo reservatório da Usina Hidrelétrica de Itaipu, na região Oeste do estado. Foram realizadas quinze entrevistas e, a partir da análise do conteúdo, com auxílio do software Iramuteq, pode-se diagnosticar a realidade regional e comprovar que estes empreendimentos não estão amparados nos princípios básicos propostos pela literatura sobre empreendimentos solidários, mas, seus verdadeiros elementos de sucesso apontam para a formalização, políticas públicas, relacionamento interpessoal, produção, liderança, apoio popular e segurança financeira. Esta pesquisa mostrou que os princípios teóricos propostos para a efetiva caracterização dos empreendimentos de economia solidária estão, pelo menos nesta região e neste contexto, sendo substituídos e consideravelmente enraizados por novos elementos de sucesso.

Palavras-chave: Autogestão. Heterogestão. Economia Solidária. Lixo. Cooperativismo.

INTRODUCTION

There is a truism identified by Singer (2002, p. 20) when he states that cooperatives that go bad close down, and those that go well cease to be cooperatives. In other words, he teaches that cooperatives that are going badly have a high rate of member participation, interested in fixing what is wrong, examining and criticizing thoroughly everything the management does, and even proposing replacement if there is no improvement. On the other hand, cooperatives that are doing well may present the opposite picture, whose participants fit into the law of least effort and allow all the power to be concentrated in the administrators, thus losing their characteristics, and giving way to the hetero-management or capitalist model.

This same understanding was already mentioned by Gaiger (2018), when he affirmed that there is a constant lack of interest in the essence of cooperative enterprises, making it common to employ workers in cooperatives and to 'professionalize' the administrators. According to him,



cooperativism has never stopped expanding in the world, but this phenomenon has been presented only under the quantitative point of view, that is, what is perceived is the growth of 'pseudo-cooperative' organizations, whose essence of solidary enterprises is increasingly corrupted by capitalism.

On this issue, Moura (2000) explains that self-management or solidarity-based enterprises necessarily need to interact with the peculiarities of the capitalist mode of production, so that they can be transposed to it. However, for this to be possible, the awareness of its members and the reformulation of institutions are necessary. On the other hand, he suggests that the attainment of new spaces through self-management and, consequently, solidarity enterprises, requires a deep consolidation of the technical bases that compose them, and especially the formation of a solid social conscience of their members, which can develop and legitimize such enterprises. In this sense, Gaiger (2018), Singer (2008), and Bertuci (2010) teach that there are basic principles that should integrate solidarity economy movements: self-management, democracy, cooperation, community participation and engagement, collective ownership of the means of production, and self-sustainability.

Thus, the objective of this research is to analyze the incidence of success elements linked to the basic theoretical precepts of the solidary economy enterprises, in cooperatives and associations of selective garbage collection, located in the far west of Paraná state.

There is no denying the importance of this study for science, as well as for the management of enterprises and regional development. Attitudes, thoughts and consumption habits have been transformed and consequently intensify the need to know in depth the organizations that mitigate this impact. Furthermore, for there to be regional development, organizations that operate in the context of the Solidarity Economy need to be understood in terms of characteristics, peculiarities, target audience and, mainly, the behavior of their members.

The recycling activity has been structured as an economic sector of relative importance for regional development, as the issue of solid waste has become, in recent years, one of the central problems in terms of urban planning and public management in practically all cities in the world (IPEA, 2017).



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For Alvear, Neder and Santini (2023), cooperativism in Brazil and around the world has become a model without direct or objective pretensions. They also explain that the fight against capitalism is no longer clearly part of the issues discussed within the scope of cooperativism and the solidarity economy as a whole.

Gaiger et al (2018) teaches that solidarity organizations, including selective collection cooperatives, are still far from the ideal of self-management. It indicates that even formally constituted as solidarity enterprises, these organizations are “dominated” by individuals who concentrate decision-making and present several characteristics of traditional, capitalist companies.

Solidarity organizations naturally face constant resistance from the external economic environment, forcing them to use protection mechanisms, mainly to enable the commercialization of their products and services and, consequently, their permanence in the market (Ribeiro; Cantoia, 2020). Likewise, Singer (2008) and Magera (2005) reiterate the basic fundamental elements for the establishment of truly solidarity-based enterprises.

Even with their fundamental characteristics obscured, Grohmann et al. (2022) explain that organizations that involve the solidarity economy present themselves as an alternative to the traditional business model, even though they are affected by the lack of social protection and legislation, as well as by the traditional form of the market.

Believing in the models of solidarity economy, Frère and Laville (2023) present their defense by stating that the solidarity economy is one of the greatest practical ways to lead to the emancipation of society, given the articulation of dimensions that go beyond traditional economic issues, but are also based on rationality, citizenship and improving people’s quality of life.

In some municipalities, there is also the incidence of individual collectors, that is, those who are not part of cooperatives and end up influencing the process. Likewise, many public policies and government aid tend to generate dependence and inhibit self-sustainability (Baptista, 2015; Besen et al., 2014; Coelho et al., 2017). On the other hand, Brasil and Gusmão (2013) teach about the difficulty of following the basic principles proposed for solidarity enterprises.



Colazzos (2017) teaches that public policies can be national, state or municipal, explaining that these will be designed based on the observation, conception and interests of those who implement them. Some local (municipal) policies tend to be more assertive and, literally, influence the volume of production and consequent remuneration of participants (Alcântara, 2014).

Santos and Carvalhal (2015) report that many collectors understand that the association or cooperative itself is committed to the city government and that the organization itself does not help to recognize the work of the category.

The approaches to the context involving the Solidarity Economy have found many divergences regarding the types of actions or transformations expected from their activities. These, in turn, are mainly linked to the social transformation expected from their respective actions, involving tactical and strategic issues. There is no uniformity of opinions or concretely attributed concepts, however, there is clarity in the convergence of opinion that the actions involving the context of the Solidarity Economy clearly differ from the capitalist organization or the maximization of the profit rate, given the unanimous agreement regarding the main purposes of the enterprises: generation of work and income, participation of all in management and full personal and social development of the participants of the solidarity enterprise (Schmidt, 2013).

The above statements can be verified, in particular, in the works of Gaiger et al (2018), Dávila et al. (2018), Eguiluz and Mendiguren (2018) and Esteves, Pereira and Spink (2019), whose experiences show situations and opinions related to the concepts of Solidarity Economy that distance themselves from uniformity, but converge on other points: generation of work and income, participation and involvement in the management of the enterprise, search for personal and social development, among others. In fact, it is clear that all forms of solidarity organization, especially in the economic area, are positioned against the capitalist system implemented in most of the world. Singer (2006) explains exactly this, stating that Solidarity Economy organizations create opportunities for development, whose logic is opposite to the dominant system implemented. Thus, he teaches that a SE enterprise is a free association of producers who overcome the subordination of work (characteristic of the wage relationship) and practice self-management. Even so, he emphasizes that these organizations must remember that they are part of a capitalist world and must qualify themselves to become competitive.



The differences in understanding of cooperative and associative thinking are reflected in the publications analyzed, to the point that some cases report the occurrence of conflicts of interest in social and financial terms. Furthermore, it was also noted that collective interests, the reason and fundamental pillar of the solidarity economy, are shaken by situations overshadowed by individual interests in several situations (Menafrá, 2015; Cardenas et al., 2016; Gutberlet et al., 2017).

As for the elements of success of enterprises, studies point to mistaken approaches to the concepts offered by the literature, especially in situations that are confused with the normal functioning of the business or corporate sector. This situation becomes evident, throughout the analyses, due to the researchers' own perception that the associations and cooperatives that receive the most public support and resources, as well as those that are best organized administratively, are consolidating and advancing. (Cardenas et al., 2016; Esteves; Pereira; Spink, 2019).

Solidarity-based enterprises are choosing new sustainability and management factors, perhaps without this being something direct and perceptible from the perspective of the actors themselves. Reports of successful organizations in this sector, it seems, are far from presenting themselves as enterprises that discuss and apply in a non-negotiable way the principles of self-management, democracy, cooperation, participation, community engagement, collective ownership of the means of production and self-sustainability (Gaiger et al., 2018; Singer, 2008; Bertuci, 2010; Santos; Carvalhal, 2015).

It is not possible to detect, directly and objectively, any formal observation regarding the management process of these solidarity-based enterprises, but in a subjective analysis this observation appears to be possible and capable of being detected indirectly, mainly through the observation of the forms of organization, income distribution and desire for public policies. Therefore, the distance from the elements considered essential by Gaiger et al (2018), Singer (2008) and Bertuci (2010) seems to be clear.

Finally, the lack of involvement, high turnover and demotivation of the actors involved in solidarity-based enterprises is a result of the disbelief related to the regulation of public policies associated with the sector and the treatment offered by society itself (Colazzos, 2017; Gutberlet et al., 2017). In Brazil, it is still possible to observe significant rates of ignorance, prejudice and indifference on the part of society, especially when the enterprises involve less favored sectors or low-income people. Contrary to this finding, investments in public policies linked to the solidarity economy tend to generate



a more humane and responsible society, encourage the preservation of nature and the spirit of cooperation. (Umpierre et al., 2018)

METHOD

With a qualitative approach, questions were raised about the day-to-day operations and organization of the cooperatives and associations of collectors located in the fifteen municipalities of Paraná that are bathed by the reservoir of the Itaipu Hydroelectric Power Plant. They are: Foz do Iguaçu, Santa Helena, Itaipulândia, Diamante D'Oeste, Entre Rios do Oeste, Guaíra, Marechal, Cândido Rondon, Medianeira, Mercedes, Missal, Pato Bragado, São José das Palmeiras, São Miguel do Iguaçu, Santa Terezinha de Itaipu, and Terra Roxa.

Strictly respecting the relevant legislation, all care related to research ethics was observed, allowing the operationalization of the research procedures to be based on “on-site” visits in the period from 03/25/2021 to 04/19/2021, when structured interviews were conducted with the presidents of the cooperatives or associations researched.

The data collection instrument was composed of forty (40) questions and built based on the basic premises for solidarity economy enterprises, associated mainly with the teachings of Gaiger (2018), Singer (2008), and Bertuci (2010), The construction of the instrument was also supported by the findings and statements of Mota (1980), Sorbille (2000), França Filho (2002), Pinto (2006), Carvalho (2008), Santos (2010), Morais (2011), Pinhel (2013), Schmidt (2013), Ribeiro (2014), Silva (2015), Cardenas, Alvarez, and Cañaverl (2016), Colazzos (2017), Oliveira (2018), and Carvajal and Calvache (2019).

In order to preserve the identity of the respondents, the municipalities were named by codenames (M1 to M15). Except for municipalities M1 and M11, which have waste picker cooperatives, all other enterprises are characterized as associations.

The analysis procedures were preceded by the formation of the research corpus, which included the literal transcription of the interviewees' speeches for the electronic analysis using the Iramuteq software. This transcription came from 16.5 hours of interviews and resulted in the generation of 57 pages of text, single-spaced, font size 12. The Iramuteq software is free and has been used in Brazil since 2013.



Its processing framework is linked to the R¹ statistical package for content analysis, lexicometry, and content analysis.

The process of feeding the software with the research data took place from 5/01/2021 to 6/10/2021, following the structure required for the data insertion process. After this processing, it became possible to analyze the content of the 15 texts present in the text corpus. For the presentation of the results and exploration of the content, we opted for the Descending Hierarchical Classification Analysis - DHA and Similarity Analysis.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The literature defends that there are characteristics that should not be distanced from solidarity enterprises: self-management, democracy, cooperation, participation and community engagement, collective ownership of the means of production, and self-sustainability (Gaiger, 2018; Singer, 2008; Bertuci, 2010). About this, still in the mid-1980s, Motta (1980) already taught that self-management is characterized by the complete autonomy of employees or members in the decisions of the organization, in all processes. From the formulation of internal guidelines, planning, and organizational processes, division of labor, and decisions about income distribution. Along the same line of thought, Baptista (2015) reiterates that the guiding principles of the organizational format of solidarity enterprises suggest the existence of a democratic management model, suggesting that self-management synthesizes these principles. In this context, the author uses the experience of Cançado (2007) when he states that self-management is achieved through the full participation of the cooperative or associated members as decision-makers, the definition of strategies and future objectives, corroborating the assertion that, in this scenario, the participation of the members does not only consist of rights, but of duties.

Therefore, it is evident that when resorting to the self-management model, the enterprises must observe the requirements of democratic management, participation, cooperation, and community engagement. In this sense, regarding the management system and consequently the decision-making

1 'R' is a multi-paradigm, object-oriented, functional programming, dynamic, weakly typed programming language used for data manipulation, analysis, and visualization.



process within the researched enterprises, it was found that in all cases decisions are centralized in the president or administrator of the association or cooperative. In addition, it is not unusual for them to suffer interference from external actors linked to public authorities. This reality is present in all the associations and cooperatives surveyed, as demonstrated by some statements transcribed in full which help in the understanding of this context:

“...here the decisions are made by myself. People come here to the office, and I decide everything. I don't let anything stand still. (Sic, M11)

“... here the president decides everything. Sometimes we ask for some help from the technician or call the city hall, but it is very difficult. Almost everything I

decide myself. (Sic, M2) (Translated by the authors)

This finding would already be enough to rule out the practice of self-management and democratic management of the enterprises surveyed, but upon analyzing the other questions made to the directors, it is possible to understand some factors that would explain this characteristic. It can be clearly seen that the centralization of decisions in the figure of the president occurs because there is no other alternative given the context found, that is, if the president does not take responsibility, things do not happen, and the organization tends to perish. On the other hand, it is also true that there are realities in which the president himself makes a point of using his authority and literally ‘shows who’s the boss.’

The findings also show that in 100% of the entities surveyed, the assemblies are held only to elect new directors, and even then, they are only held for reasons of legal necessity in terms of formalizing contracts and agreements with public entities or receiving benefits, whether in terms of machinery, equipment, real estate, among others. It was also found that in two of the enterprises there is not even any knowledge about the minute book or any other type of similar record.

The collective ownership of the means of production is related to the effective ownership, by the working class involved, the means used for production or subsistence, seeking to rule out any characterization of wage labor. This, in turn, is the main characteristic of the capitalist mode of production. Therefore, the collective property is literally present when the means of production are owned and controlled by those who use them, just as the workplaces are managed by those who work there. On the other hand, self-sustainability is characterized by a state in which the organization or enterprise manages



to generate, through its own actions or labor and productive activities, the revenues, and conditions necessary to ensure the continuity of all its activities.

These conditions or characteristics are also completely removed from the reality found in the associations and cooperatives surveyed, given the dependence on public power (municipalities) in terms of physical facilities, machinery, vehicles, equipment, and in many cases even direct financial contribution.

The analysis of some transcripts of answers about the ownership of facilities, machines, vehicles, and other means of production, brings objective understanding of the local reality in terms of collective ownership of the means of production and self-sustainability:

“... we don't have anything here, it's all from the municipality. The city built it and gave it to us so that we could work. The furniture, machines, and equipment also belong to the city. The city also lends us the truck that collects the material, pays the fuel and the driver.” (Sic, M6)

“... we don't own anything here. It's all lent by the city hall, everything. The land, the warehouse, the trucks, and even the conveyor and the hydraulic press. Everything from them.” (Sic, M12) (Translated by the authors)

There are solidarity enterprises that act as capitalist companies in many different branches or sectors of the economy, maintaining their statutes and internal regulations in accordance with what the legislation recommends, but at the same time are only employers of waged labor, given that they do not fit, in essence, with the principles of the solidarity economy (Lima, 1998). Therefore, Singer (2002), Bertuci (2010), and Colazzos (2017) teach that enterprises that do not observe the characteristics of autonomy tend to lose their solidarity identity.

There is no doubt that the cooperatives and associations of selective collection in this region are doing well. Most are in an expansion phase, the work is socially supported, practically all the enterprises have waiting lines for new members, the volume of collected material has grown, the people involved show improvement in their quality of life, and there is no record of any paralyzing of activities over the past 18 years since the first enterprises of this nature were created in the region. However, it is also evident that its elements of success are not solidified in the basic precepts taught by the literature on the foundation of enterprises with solidarity characteristics. Or, as Singer (2002) has already stated, “the cooperatives and associations that are working have stopped being cooperatives and associations.”

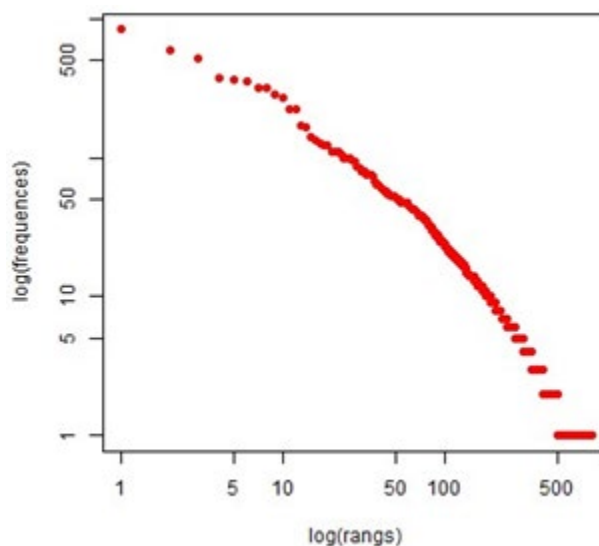


ELECTRONIC DATA ANALYSIS

Some software have evolved over the years and offer resources of great support to qualitative investigations, even breaking the barrier of using only texts, but allowing images, audio, and video data to be used as focuses of analysis. In this context is Iramuteq, specially created to indicate relationships between lexical fields² most frequently used in a textual structure, assuming the logic that words used in similar contexts are associated with the same lexical field. Therefore, it allows the analysis of textual information based on contexts and content classes, taking into account vocabulary similarity (Andrade Jr and Andrade, 2016).

Even with the possibility of performing other analyses, given the characteristics of this research, the execution and use of the Iramuteq software is concentrated in two analyses: Descending Hierarchical Classification, and Similarity Analysis. Thus, the 'summary of the Iramuteq text corpus' showed that 15 texts (15 interviews) were analyzed, containing 12,844 (twelve thousand, eight hundred and forty-four) occurrences of words, with an average of 856.27 words per transcribed interview. It also indicated that 818 text fragments became susceptible to be analyzed and allowed the subsequent construction of the descending hierarchical classification and similarity analysis.

Figure 1 | Iramuteq frequency diagram



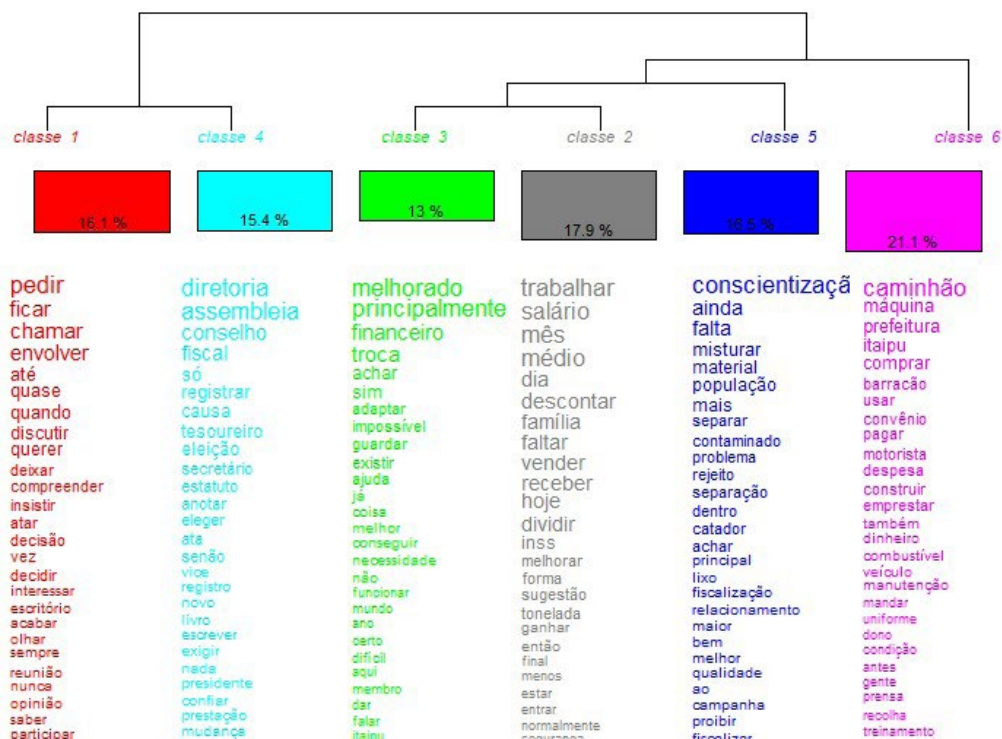
Source: Iramuteq software results (2021)

2 The lexical field is a set of words or expressions that refer to the same reality and a semantic field. It refers to a set or group of words and expressions that are directed to a probable similarity of meanings.

The Iramuteq frequency diagram (Figure 1) shows the proximity or distancing of the selected text fragments, based on a central axis. Thus, the greater the agglomeration of responses, the greater the probability of representing the same direction of understanding or interpretation, taking into account the text fragments selected by the system. Therefore, it can be noted that the vast majority of the selected text fragments are clustered, based on the central axis, revealing that there is a high probability that the answers represent the same direction or understanding.

The Descending Hierarchical Classification - DHC, explained in the sequence, makes explicit the separations or approximations of the text through word classes, identified later as categories. Thus, Figure 2, in the sequence, illustrates the detailed dendrogram of the 6 classes of words identified, allowing the identification of the hierarchy between the classes, dividing them into classes, and percentage of citations. It should be noted that the images were generated by Iramuteq based on the original texts in Portuguese, so it was not possible to present them in English.

Figure 2 | Word class dendrogram



Source - Iramuteq Software Results (2021)



The 6 classes in the dendrogram illustrated in Figure 2 separate into the following percentage: class 6 with 21.1%, class 2 with 17.9%, class 5 with 16.5%, class 1 with 16.1%, class 4 with 15.4%, and class 3 with 13%. It can also be seen from the dendrogram analysis that the classes are divided into two groups: classes 1 and 4 form one group, while classes 2, 5, and 6 forming another group. In the same way, class 6 is responsible for the link between the groups. In summary, the word class dendrogram allowed the identification of the most used words that make up the selection of text fragments from each class, henceforth simply identified as categories.

The identification or definition of the nomenclature of the categories arises from the analysis of the structure of each class, associated with the content already analyzed throughout the thesis. Likewise, the composition of the categories becomes one of the bases for defining the elements of success present in the enterprises. Therefore, based on the analysis of the content that makes them up, the categories were identified as follows: Class 1 - Involvement Category; Class 2 - Income Category; Class 3 - Quality of Life Category; Class 4 - Statute Category; Class 5 - Popular Awareness Category; Class 6 - City Hall Category.

Category 1, involvement, encompasses words and expressions such as ask, call, involve, discuss, decide, office, meeting, participate, decide, among others. Therefore, it can be seen that this composition is associated with the presidents' yearnings to involve the members in the day-to-day decisions, but with no success.

The content ordered in category 2, income, still includes the words work, receive, family, discount, divide, improve, ton, among others. Therefore, it can be seen that the expressions related to the improvement or current situation of the income of the members were essential for the composition of this category, which even shows the second-highest percentage. This fact, in itself, contributes to the perception already presented that the members make the association/cooperative, above all, a source of personal income.

Category 3, quality of life, appears associating the words improvement, financial, adapt, help, need, among others. Thus, also assertively, the result of the lexical analysis indicates precisely that the perception of the improvement of the quality of life identified in the answers of the presidents is associated dominantly with the financial issue.

Regarding category 4, statute, it is characterized by the formalization of the activities of associations and cooperatives, with regard to the registration of the enterprise in the competent bodies (Federal Revenue, Notary Offices) and the actions required by law. Besides statute, the main words that compose it are board of directors, assembly, fiscal council, treasurer, and election. Thus, the perception that all cooperatives and associations are formally registered in the competent bodies, have their boards elected, and statutes in force are confirmed, but there is a great distance between the members regarding the knowledge of these activities.

When analyzing the words grouped in category 5, popular awareness, it is clear the gathering of expressions associated with the expectation of improving the quality of the collected material, indicating as the main way out the population's awareness. Therefore, the listed words include, among others: mix, material, separate, material, contaminated, inspection, campaign, and reject. Assertively and objectively, the analysis also shows that there are bottlenecks perceived in the development of the cooperatives' activities, which include the lack of supervision and awareness of the population by the city governments.

Still with regard to category 5, recently analyzed, it is possible to realize a close relationship with the categories of 'income' (2) and 'quality of life' (3). These, in turn, indicate issues related to the salary or remuneration of the members, improvement of financial conditions, personal needs, security, and continuity of work. In other words, Popular Awareness (category 5), when coupled with public policies offered to the sector (category 6 - City Hall, under analysis in the sequence), tends to improve the quality of life of members mainly in terms of their financial situation and enable the continuity or expansion of activities in the associations and cooperatives of selective collection in the region.

With regard to category 6, City Hall, there is a preponderance of expressions associated with the associations and cooperatives' concerns regarding physical structure, machinery, vehicles, and equipment. The construction of this category makes it clear, for example, that these factors are directly linked to the agreements signed with municipal governments, which literally 'sustain' the enterprises with their public support policies. The words truck, machine, warehouse, agreement, driver, expenses, maintenance, and fuel are also highlighted here. In other words, this category

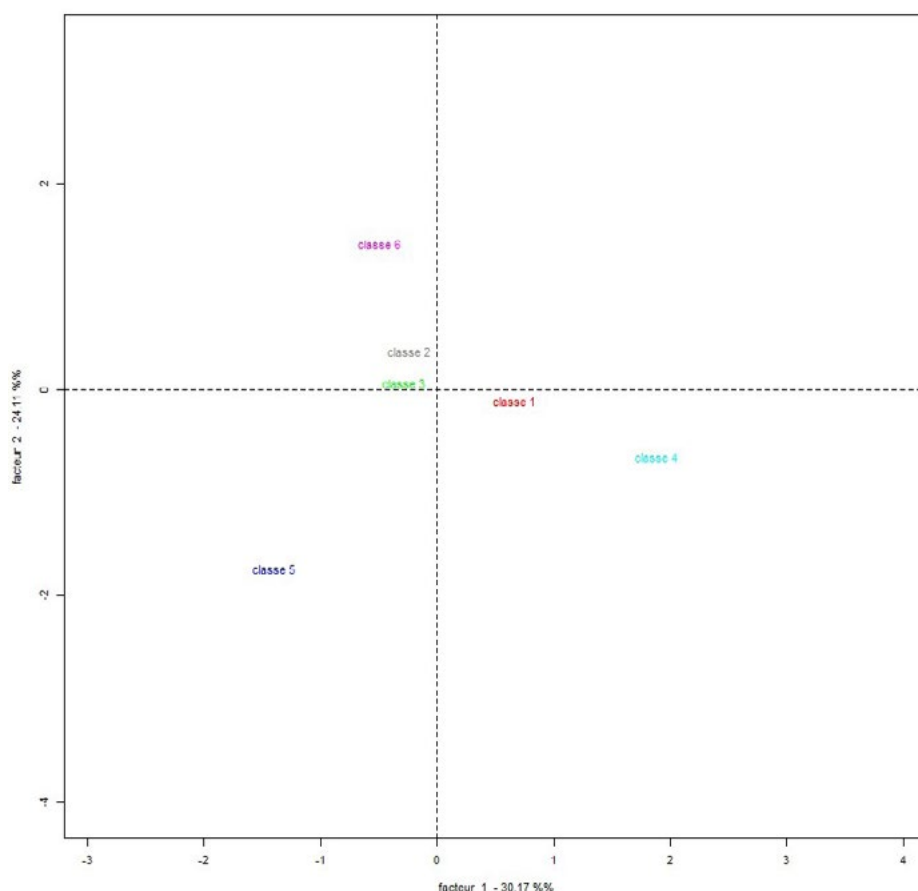


The interconnection among the groups becomes clear in the correspondence factorial analysis of the categories (Figure 3), however, at the same time, one can identify that each of the groups has its individual importance within the process. That is, at the same time that the classes are interconnected, there is considerable separation and distance in terms of the centrality of thought.

From this analysis, it is confirmed that the cooperatives and associations really do present similar needs and yearnings but are inserted in different realities in terms of structure, support, public policies, and remuneration.

Figure 4, below, identified as the correspondence factorial analysis chart, shows the two-dimensional factorial plan and the positions of the classes/categories without the words that compose them.

Figure 4 | Correspondence Factor Analysis Chart



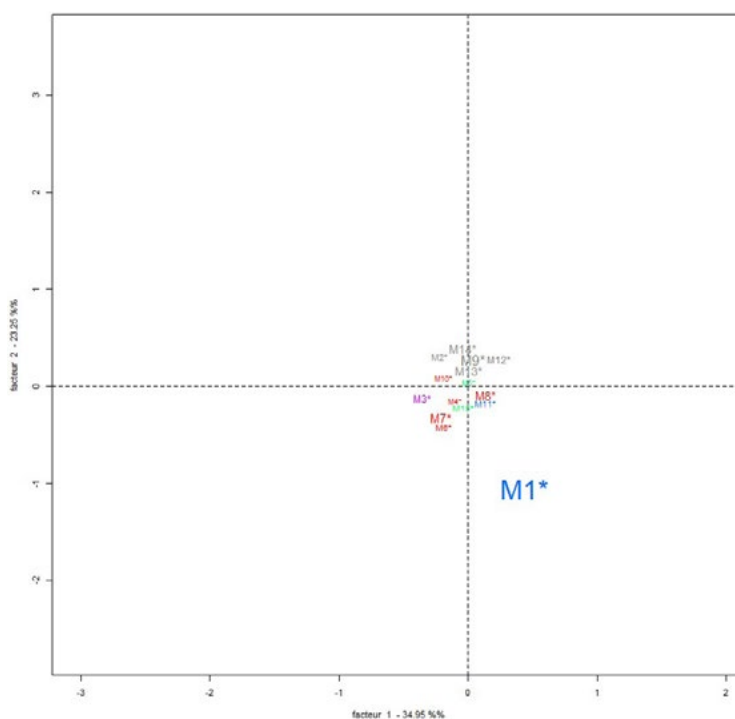
Source - Iramuteq software results (2021)



Basically, the analysis of Figure 4, makes it possible again to identify the approximation and distancing of the 6 categories. The classification proves that while categories 1, 2, and 3 are somewhat aligned, categories 4, 5, and 6 show considerable distance in terms of content and repetitions.

Similarly, Figure 5 also illustrates the similarities or distancing, in this case of the textual corpus (unification of the 15 answers - M1 to M15) or the unitary corpus (individual answers from each of the interviews). In other words, it becomes possible to identify approximation or distancing in terms of the format of the answers, words and expressions used, and the direction of the questions.

Figure 5 | Grouping of responses per municipality



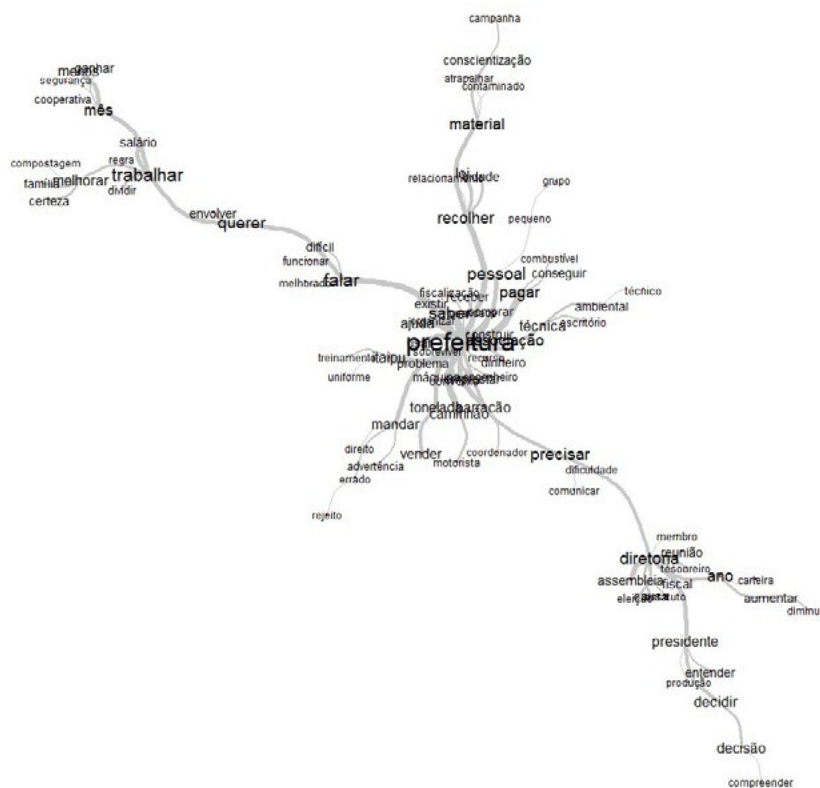
Source - Iramuteq Software Results (2021)

In this case, it is evident that at the same time that there is a marked approximation of content in the answers from 14 municipalities, the information obtained from the M1 enterprise maintains a considerable distance from the other corpora. However, the justification or explanation for this distance lies in the fact that the M1 enterprise is a cooperative and not an association. On the other hand, it is

not possible to use only this argument because M11 also shows this organization model (cooperative). Therefore, when analyzing the answers obtained from the interview in municipality M1, it is certain that it is an organization with some different characteristics in terms of structure, relationship with members, and especially in the opinion regarding dependence on the municipal government.

The similarity analysis, illustrated in Figure 6, provides indications of the connection between words and the number of times they are repeated, helping to identify the structure of the text corpus. Moreover, it allows us to distinguish common parts and probable specificities according to the variables. As previously reported, the images were generated in Iramuteq in portuguese.

Figure 6 | Similarity Chart



Source - Iramuteq software results (2021)

The similarity chart (Figure 6) illustrates the most mentioned words and their connections, leading to the centralization of expressions and/or words with the highest correlation index. Thus, the word ‘City Hall’ is shown in the center of the network/web, allowing the clear interpretation that literally the municipal government presents itself as the great ‘heart’ of the enterprises linked to the



selective collection in this region.

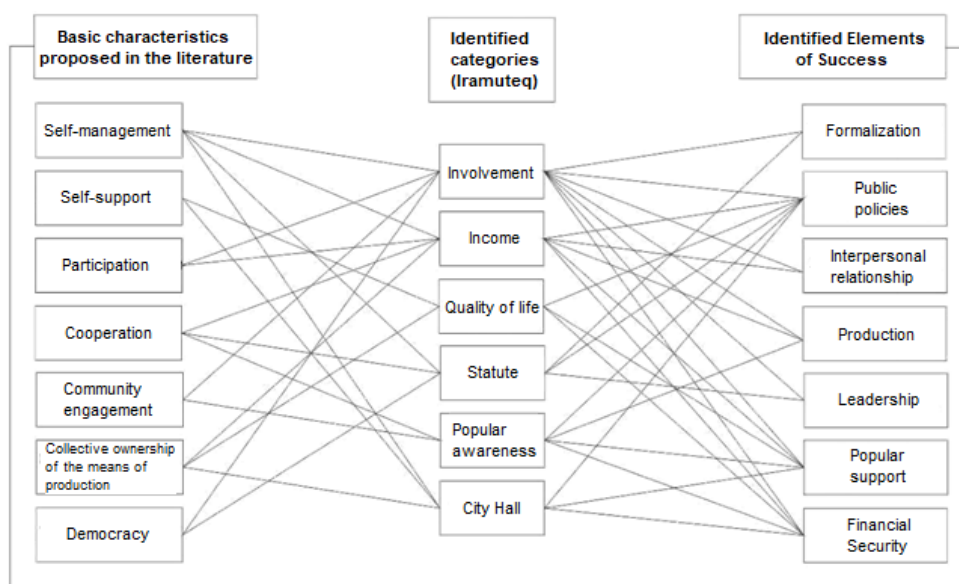
It should be noted that 14 out of the 15 presidents interviewed affirmed that the cooperatives or associations would not exist without the current alliance, partnership, agreement, or support from the municipal governments.

IDENTIFYING THE ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Recalling Gaiger (2018), Singer (2008), and Bertuci (2010), the basic characteristics proposed not to be absent from solidarity economy enterprises are based on self-management, democracy, participation, cooperation, self-sustainability, collective ownership of the means of production, and community engagement. Therefore, it was evident that these factors are extremely distant from the reality found, but rather that other elements emerge as dominant characteristics in these enterprises. On the other hand, the 6 categories listed from the analysis offered by the Iramuteq software were: involvement, income, quality of life, statute, popular awareness, and city hall.

Thus, aiming at this comparison and in order to identify and justify the elements of success found, Figure 7 was built, which outlines the analysis paths used in this final step, as well as illustrates the process of identifying the elements of success.

Figure 7 | Identifying the elements of success



Source – Research data (2021).

In a comparative analysis, it is possible to see that the characteristic of self-management correlates with 4 categories identified by the software: involvement, income, statute, and municipality. Thus, when observing the management process, decision-making, and organization of cooperatives and associations, it can be seen, in a very objective way, that the characteristics of self-management are far from integrating the reality of the enterprises. Therefore, this distancing is clearly justified by the lack of involvement of the members (category), even though this is a premise of the statute in force. Likewise, the detection that the primary concern of the members is the monthly income earned is associated with the need to maintain partnerships or agreements with municipal governments, allowing them (the municipal governments) to maintain even administrative control of the associations and cooperatives.

The category involvement, in turn, gives rise to the emergence of 7 elements of success, since it was identified the desire for the involvement of more people in the formal procedures of the associations and cooperatives, besides being clear that the greater the involvement, the greater the possibility of consolidation and growth of public policies related to the sector.

With regard to the characteristic of self-sustainability, there is a close relationship with the categories of quality of life and city hall, given that the findings themselves show the insufficient conditions to make the cooperatives and associations operational without the support of the city halls, thus, in the end, making any improvement in the quality of life of these workers impossible. In other words, the enterprises are not self-sustainable and, thus, do not bring this characteristic proposed by Gaiger (2018), Singer (2008), and Bertuci (2010).

The category quality of life, in turn, points to the elements of successful public policies, popular support, and financial security. This correlation is justified by the fact that obviously the consolidation and expansion of public policies related to the sector tend to ensure a better quality of life for the actors involved. These, in turn, can be 'accelerated' if popular support is effectively perceived, or else, the public policies themselves tend to generate more and better popular support. Likewise, as a consequence, from such consolidation and advancement in public policies, financial security tends to become effective.

Participation, pointed out as an essential characteristic by the literature already presented, shows a close relationship with two categories: involvement and income. Therefore, it seems obvious that the participation characteristic is associated with involvement, given the similarity of



meanings. However, its relationship with the category income is justified by the coherent diagnosis that greater participation tends to cause a better labor force, and, consequently, a higher income.

Similarly, the category income is associated with 5 success factors identified here: public policies, interpersonal relationships, production, popular support, and financial security. Therefore, this correlation is explicit in the face of other factors already listed, given the close relationship of income (category) with the public policies that support the sector, both financial and regulatory. Moreover, the interpersonal relationship and the improvement of production rates support the income guarantee, identified in the elements of success as financial security. And finally, popular support in terms of awareness and opinion tends to generate a greater volume of material and consequently increase the profitability of those involved.

Almost equally presents the characteristic cooperation, whose correlation shows up with the categories of income, statute, and popular awareness. In other words, cooperation in enforcing statutory and day-to-day issues tends to generate a better image in society, and, again, result in increased income.

On the other hand, the category statute is closely related to three elements of success: formalization, public policies, and leadership. The first (formalization) shows itself to be essential for solidarity organizations because it allows the signing of agreements and partnerships with public authorities, allowing the use of associated public policies. Likewise, there is a perceived need for statutory clarification as to the leadership process of associations and cooperatives, given that currently (according to the legislation) decisions must be taken jointly, through assemblies, which is literally not happening.

The analysis of the correlations that involve the characteristics of community engagement is also very similar to the characteristics of participation and involvement already discussed, pointing in the same way to the categories of involvement and popular awareness. The latter, in turn, correlates with 4 elements of success: public policies, popular support, production, and financial security. This relationship is justified by the statements already listed, but especially because popular awareness tends to generate greater production and consequently provide and consolidate financial security.

With regard to the collective ownership of the means of production, one can see the correlation with the characteristics of income, quality of life, and, obviously, the city hall. These associations show that, in essence, there is no collective ownership of the means of production in the cooperatives and associations



surveyed, but the existing means of production are generating income and guaranteeing expansion of the quality of life of those involved. Therefore, the means of production, almost in their totality, belong to the municipalities. Thus, this last category (municipality) is closely related to the 3 elements of success diagnosed: popular support, financial security, and, obviously, public policies. In other words, there is no denying that the municipalities are today the most responsible for the financial consolidation of the enterprises of this characteristic in the researched region, as well as being responsible for the public policies with the greatest impact, and for developing awareness and popular participation actions.

The election of the seven elements of success of the associations and cooperatives of selective collection of the region researched is based on the assumption of the diagnosed reality. Today, effectively, the provision of financial security, popular support, the leadership process, the means of production employed, strong interpersonal relationships, clear and aggressive public policies, and formalization are presented as indicators for the continuity and growth of these enterprises.

Finally, in terms of contribution to the literature associated with the broad theme of the solidarity economy, it is observed that this research indicates that the evidence supposedly presented by the precursors at the end of the last century is already confirmed in practice. In other words, although there are basic premises that should characterize solidarity enterprises, they are “adapting” to the global economic scenario in order to remain alive.

From this perspective of analysis and based on the results of this research, there is no possibility that the traditional models of solidarity economy enterprises can remain alive amidst the capitalist model established in the world. Certainly, the concessions already admitted tend to expand so that in the near future even the legislation will be adjusted and indicate, finally, that the enterprises until now called solidarity-based, will be nothing more than ordinary companies.

Therefore, in conclusion, it remains to state that this sad reality does not arise directly from the will of the people involved or engaged in the ventures, but rather mainly from the lack of knowledge about the management processes and the meager opportunities for success that the ventures would have, if they faithfully observed the elementary concepts of the solidarity economy. It is important to note that only after overcoming the elements identified in this research will the projects be able to contribute to advances in management and regional development.



CONCLUSION

Throughout this research, there was the clear perception that the factors or elements of success in life in the analyzed cooperatives and associations are far from resembling the elementary theoretical principles proposed by Gaiger (2018), Singer (2008), and Bertuci (2010), which are: self-management, democracy, cooperation, participation, community engagement, collective ownership of the means of production, and self-sustainability. This is a fact.

By identifying that the elements for success recommended by the already known theory are not a reality in these enterprises, we contribute by affirming and informing that there are other or real elements that can serve as a basis and guide for organizations with solidary characteristics, especially those linked to the process of selective garbage collection. These are: formalization, public policies, interpersonal relationships, production, leadership, popular support, and financial security.

It is possible to affirm that the currently known theoretical position is far from the reality found. In this sense, Singer himself (2002) had already warned about the difficulty of making the self-management model operational, and also about the barriers in terms of the involvement of the workers themselves in the day-to-day activities of the enterprises. Based on this research, then, new management paths for solidarity-based enterprises emerge, based not on self-management, democracy, cooperation, participation, community engagement, collective ownership of the means of production and self-sustainability, but on formalization, public policies, interpersonal relationships, production, leadership, popular support, and financial security.

This is not to say, however, that none of what was previously proposed is correct or cannot work, but rather that at the current juncture the solidarity economy organizations need to consider their elements of success in the correct formalization process, seek engagement, financial and collaborative support in public policies, develop methods that protect and enhance interpersonal relationships, ensure the modernization and proper control of the means of production, identify and elect capable leaders that represent and guide them, seek popular support through correct and assertive attitudes of social responsibility, and as a consequence, ensure the financial security of their members.



Now, if it has already been diagnosed that economic efficiency is not the main merit of the models that suggest self-management, that the successful solidarity economy organizations are those that distance themselves from the theoretical proposal (Singer, 2002), that many initiatives of solidarity enterprises are considered only as an alternative of income generation (Ferraz, 2004), and even though the solidarity economy organizations survive in the face of an eminent contradiction between the form of organization of the proposal and the need to be competitive in the market (Sorbille, 2000), why not identifying and proposing new alternatives or elements of success for these organizations? This is the contribution of this research.

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