

## Expanded abstract

# The role of the Galician *Cofradías* in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: protection of marine resources and equity

### Contextualization and objectives

In Galicia (northwest Spain), shellfish gatherers and small-scale fishers are organised in the so-called *Cofradías*, entities that arise from a long associative tradition (Taboada, 2004) and have a recognised position in the fishing sector. Given their historical adaptation and the existing regulatory framework, *cofradías* are entrusted with functions within a system of marine resources co-management (McGinnis and Ostrom, 2014; Jentoft and Chuenpagdee, 2015), sharing responsibilities with the European, national and regional administrations (Law 3/2001; Regulation (EC) n° 2371/2002; Decree 8/2014).

At the same time, *cofradías* of Galicia (and Spain) are recognised as Social Economy entities (Cervera, 2010; Law 5/2011; Law 6/2016). In Galicia there are 63 *cofradías*, which combine the tasks of the Public Administration with the development of productive and commercialisation activities (Decree 8/2014; Federación Galega de CP, 2018). These activities have a business nature and are autonomously managed by their members, who share and benefit from the use and exploitation of marine resources (Astorkiza et al, 2018; García-Lorenzo et al, 2019b). Thus, *cofradías* have a hybrid character between the public and the private (Williamson, 2007; Mc Ginnis and Ostrom, 2014; Jentoft and Chuenpagdee, 2015) that conditions its organisational structure and its performance (García-Lorenzo et al, 2019a).

Their role within the fishing sector gives them competences in the management and exploitation of marine resources, activities that they carry out collectively as a Social Economy entities. This position allows *cofradías* to influence different aspects of sustainable development, mainly at the local level. In this way, the objective of this work is to study how the Galician *cofradías* contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Specifically, the study is focused on the protection of coastal marine and inland water resources, the equity in access to common goods and the income distribution, related to SDG 14 of Life Below Water and SDG 10 of Reduced Inequalities.

### Design and methodology

The analysis is based on three previous studies about *cofradías* of Galicia. Two of them were done from the institutional perspective and focused on the adaptative processes in *cofradías*

(García-Lorenzo et al, 2019a) and the analysis of governance interactions (García-Lorenzo and Varela-Lafuente, 2019). Another one was done from the perspective of the Social Economy and participatory firm approach and focused on members' participation in *cofradías* (García-Lorenzo et al, 2019b).

With these bases, the study aims to show a joint vision of the Galician *cofradías* as entities that simultaneously belong to two areas that, individually, are well positioned to contribute to sustainable development: small-scale fisheries (WorldFish et al, 2018; Pascual-Fernández et al, 2020; Said et al, 2020) and the Social Economy (Bastida et al, 2020; Castro-Núñez et al, 2020; Chávez-Ávila and Gallego-Bono, 2020). The integrated analysis of this dual position seeks to deepen the capacity of Galician *cofradías* to contribute to the achievement of SDG 10 and SDG 14.

Consequently, the study is structured in four sections: 1) Introduction; 2) Presentation of the *cofradías* highlighting their position as actors within a fisheries co-management system and their configuration as Social Economy entities; 3) Analysis of *cofradías*' characteristics that contribute to the achievement of SDGs 10 and 14; 4) Presentation of the main conclusions of the study.

## Results, limitations and implications

The analysis carried out allows to present the capacity of Galician *cofradías* to contribute to certain aspects of sustainable development. Thus, it is shown that the functions attributed within the co-management of marine resources, their traditional origin, their self-management character and compliance with cooperative principles are the main characteristics of *cofradías* that can favor the implementation of these Sustainable Development Goals.

Specifically, the results focus on the ability to contribute to SDG 14 of Life Below Water and some of its targets (14.2 - Sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems; 14.4 - Effectively regulate harvesting and implementation of science-based management plans; 14.5 - Conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas; 14.b - Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets; 14.c - Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources), and to SDG 10 of Reduced Inequalities and some of its targets (10.1- Achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average; 10.2 - Empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all; 10.3 - Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome).

The study also presents certain synergies with other SDG, such as SDG 1 of No Poverty, SDG 2 of Zero Hunger, SDG 5 of Gender Equality, SDG 8 of Decent Work and Economic Growth or SDG 16 of Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. However, the study does not carry out an exhaustive analysis of *cofradías*' capacity of influence all the SDGs.

This study helps to better understand how the actions of the Galician *cofradías* (and the definition of their regulatory framework) can generate synergies in multiple aspects of sustainable development, given their position in the small-scale fisheries sector and the social economy sector.

## Conclusions and original contributions

The originality of the study lies in interrelating the position and characteristics of the Galician *cofradías* with the Sustainable Development Goals. In this way, it is identified that Galician *cofradías* have an important capacity to influence in some aspects identified in the Agenda 2030, such as resources protection, access to natural and common resources and economic redistribution. This influence is possible mainly because of their situation as actors and users within the fishing and shellfish co-management system and the public-private nature of their organisational structure. This structure arises from the adaptation to the historical institutional conditions and the self-organised character, and has framed *cofradías* as Social Economy entities that comply with the cooperative principles.

*Cofradías* share the management of coastal and inland water resources with public administrations and other entities in the sector, jointly protecting them and contributing to the objective of Life Below Water. Specifically, they collaborate in the organisation of the sector and carry out control and surveillance tasks, as well as several sustainable management plans. To fulfill these tasks, the *cofradías* actively participate in decision-making processes of the fishing co-management system, although this participation is not always effective.

The link to the territory of these organisations and the collective way of exploitation also encourages the perception of the resource as a means of subsistence and provides resilience to the sector. Traditional production methods are maintained, making the activity less intensive and aggressive with the marine environment, and a closer and more real knowledge of the resource is achieved, obtaining useful information for fisheries management. Despite this, there are conservative and short-term attitudes among fishers, derived from the confluence of interests, which can go against sustainable development.

On the other hand, *cofradías* carry out their business activity in a local and rural environment, promoting the endogenous development of the region through the fixation of population and the generation of added value. This business activity is carried out collectively, democratically and complying with the principle of economic participation, which contributes to the achievement of the objective of Reduced Inequalities. At the same time, some characteristic of the *cofradía* as a Social Economy entity, contribute to the reduction of inequalities in the access to natural and common resources.

**Keywords:** *Cofradías*, Sustainable Development Goals, Marine resources management, environmental protection, self-management, equity.