

## Expanded abstract

### The Popular and Solidarity Economy in Ecuador. Women's empowerment

There is a growing interest in the analysis and study of female empowerment, and a considerable number of researchers such as Kate, Rappaport, Shuler, Kabeer, among others, are analyzing; and conceptualizing it, developing theoretical approaches.

This term is polysemic, multidimensional, includes political, social, labor, psychological aspects. It has emerged in the 1960s in different contexts, and is currently part of the sustainable development goals, which have a transformative agenda to improve living conditions and opportunities for women.

This research explains the female empowerment in the sector of popular and solidarity economy in Ecuador. The first part of the research explores the theory of the emergence of social economy and popular and solidarity economy, the approaches of social enterprises; and solidarity economy, the conceptualizations of empowerment; and female participation.; The second part presents statistical data from official public sources such as the Data of the Superintendence of Popular and Solidarity Economy.

The central objective is to analyze the concept of empowerment focused on women and their participation in productive enterprises of the popular and solidarity economy in Ecuador from different positions.

The research methodology used is descriptive, documentary, and based on a bibliographic review of the authors that enrich the theoretical framework of female empowerment and some thinkers, experts in the field of social economy such as Robert Owen and some Ricardian anti-capitalists: William Thompson, George Mudie, William King, Thomas Hodgskin, John Gray and John Francis Bray.

The authors conclude in the theoretical part of empowerment; that it is a process in which the individuals makes life choices by accessing the resources of his environment where he interacts individually and collectively; in contexts where he had previously been denied, assuming more control and power, generating welfare to their living conditions, developing their individual and collective capabilities. The locution of popular and solidarity economy, which is a very Ecuadorian concept that emerged in the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, responds to a national and cultural economic reality, it is related how women in this sector can find an economy with a human face and develop collective and individual skills, become leaders, politicians, entrepreneurs.

According to the statistical sources of the United Nations, it indicates that in Ecuador there are gender gaps. Women earn 25% less than men for doing the same work, in rural areas, 15.2% of women are illiterate.; Women work 16 to 23 hours more than men, and the unem-

ployment rate for women is 6.7% and 4.2% for men. The group with few job opportunities is young people aged 18 to 29 years.

The employment rate for women is 25.5% and 37.8% for men, which shows that the labor market continues to be exclusive, and this is more evident in ethnic groups such as the indigenous group with 9.2% employment rate.

Women in Ecuador are more involved in agricultural, commercial activities, and accommodation and food services. The process of women's empowerment to undertake small businesses, which is why the entrepreneurship activity rate for Tea industry is 47.91%. The situation is repeated in other Latin American countries such as Colombia, Peru and Chile.

In this way, women start businesses out of necessity, generating their own income and these are income-generating projects can produce positive changes in their lives such as "leaving the narrow framework of the home, meeting with other women and finding solutions to their needs, relating to other social agents and solving new problems" (Murguialday, 1999).

Finally, the statistical reviews contrast the variables studied in the labor field, such as the existing gaps, firewood distributed by sex, women as credit subjects, participation in managerial positions, level of education.

It can be concluded that Ecuadorian women, in a context of social exclusion, have become involved in productive activities of the popular and solidarity-based model, providing a scenario for their empowerment and influencing the formulation of gender public policies. Therefore, it demands that the state be dynamic and responsive to the challenges, transforming citizens' priorities expressed in elections into political decisions. Thus, the role of the state consists of its ability to decide on the scope and form of intervention in the economy.

In this context of female empowerment, some public policies in Ecuador are mentioned in favor of economic, political, and social empowerment, which are included in the National Development Plan 2017-2021 in objectives 1 and 4. Objective 1 incorporates the term economic and social inclusion as a key element to combat poverty, generate capacities, and promote opportunities, such as comprehensive attention to priority attention groups. Objective 4 refers to financial inclusion as access to financial products, public contracting, and strengthening of actors.

Therefore, in theoretical terms, "The empowerment of women in the popular and solidarity economy is a life choice that allows them to access resources, organize their agendas, obtain decision-making power and leadership in a context of inequality and deep gender gaps, producing changes in their community."

The limitations of the research are the limited access to statistical data, slow institutionalization in recent years-is slow, and the need for further development of the law. The originality of this work lies in the creativity of the authors in connecting theoretical aspects with realities and statistical data. In addition, in the academic environment where the authors work, it is necessary to mark the presence of women researchers in economic studies and contribute to a more sustainable Ecuador and a more sustainable world.