

Expanded abstract

Cooperativism in the governance of territorial development. The case of the municipality of Bonares

Objectives

Territorial development processes are based on participation by local socioeconomic actors (civil society, business community, public institutions, etc.). The participation, coordination and cooperation between these actors in what is known as territorial governance is a key variable determining the success or failure of a particular development strategy. Therefore, the main aim of this study is to show, for a specific case study, how the cooperative model can be a potential solution for successfully implementing territorial governance processes and models with a view to stimulating development in the places where these initiatives are adopted. The hypothesis underpinning the study is that the promotion of territorial development through cooperativism enables an efficient, effective response to the variables identified in the literature as characterising the complexity of successful territorial governance processes.

Methodology

In order to identify the variables characterising territorial governance models, a literature review was carried out using articles from the Web of Science and SCOPUS with titles containing the following concepts: 'territorial development' and 'territorial governance'. Based on this conceptual analysis, the main variables characterising territorial governance processes and models and the ways in which they must be present to ensure the success of these processes were identified.

Each of these variables was then assigned a value for a case study of successful territorial governance (the municipality of Bonares in Andalusia, Spain), identifying the extent to which they are present in the governance model used in the municipality, which is based on cooperativism and the creation of a second-degree cooperative known as COOPINTE.

To explore the case study and determine the extent to which these variables are present in the model used in Bonares, a qualitative methodology based on the following tools was used: a semi-structured, in-depth interview, a concept map based on the results of the interview and an analysis of secondary information from documents describing the origin and evolution of the cooperative model in the municipality.

The interview was held in May 2021 and transcribed in Word format, before being analysed by creating a concept map and counting the most repeated expressions. The most important aspects of the interview were also summarised, with a focus on the model's origin and evolu-

tion and the challenges that it faces in the future. The interview used open-ended questions to ascertain the degree to which the variables identified in the literature review are present in the territorial governance model implemented in Bonares.

This primary information was supplemented with secondary information providing further details about this governance model. The two sources consulted were: a) García, J.A. & Martín, F. (2019): *COOPINTE. Modelo Bonares. Colaboración e Intercooperación en la Economía Social, bases para el desarrollo local*. Final project for the University Expert Course in Solidarity Economy and Social Entrepreneurship at the University of Huelva, mimeo and b) Monzón Campos, J.L. & Antuñano Maruri, I. (2013): *Cooperativismo y responsabilidad social empresarial. Veinte casos de cooperativas socialmente responsables*, CIRIEC-España, Valencia.

Discussion of results

According to Vázquez Barquero (2007), Vergara (2004) and Zulaka, Sánchez & Alieta (2022), among other scholars, the complexity resulting from the participation of multiple actors in territorial development processes must be addressed by implementing flexible, functional governance models capable of providing an agile response to ongoing challenges. The governance model used in Bonares is a second-degree cooperative (COOPINTE) whose members include cooperatives from different productive sectors, Bonares Municipal Council and even the Mancomunidad de Desarrollo del Condado. This model lends structure to the collaboration and cooperation between these actors, enabling an agile response to local needs.

As Hernández & Salas (2021) acknowledge, one of the most important variables in territorial governance models is training for the local population, which has been present in the Bonares model from the outset. Training and re-training for COOPINTE members and local residents is one of the main activities offered by the cooperative.

Other variables that must be present in new territorial governance models, according to Brunet & Baltar (2010), Vázquez (2018a,b) and Vergara (2004), relate to the need to build innovative institutions capable of responding to change. This is true of the Bonares model as it is the first second-degree cooperative to be founded in Andalusia, bringing together a wide variety of productive sectors, as well as the local authorities themselves.

Meanwhile, Madoery (2016), Vázquez Barquero (1999) and Boissier (2004) emphasise the importance of redistributing power in territorial governance processes, transforming the public institutions from rulers to facilitators of relations. According to the information analysed, this factor is also present in the Bonares model as the inclusion of the municipal council among the members of the second-degree cooperative places it on an equal footing with other members.

In addition, as Cerrillo i Matínez (2005), Rhodes (2005) and Zulaka, Sánchez & Alieta (2022) show, governance models must be based on public-private cooperation and networks; this is true of the Bonares model, which features cooperation between the municipal council and local cooperatives and collaboration between COOPINTE and other networks outside the municipality, which belong to the Alternative and Solidarity Economy Network (REAS). Indeed,

'cooperatives', 'members', 'meetings' and 'agreed' were the most frequently repeated words in the interview.

These mixed public-private collaboration and cooperation networks must be stable, durable and not exclusively political, although the public institutions should be among the participants (Llorente Adan, 2021 and Madoery, 2016). The creation of the COOPINTE second-degree cooperative more than 24 years ago has made this governance model highly stable and enabled long-term strategies and objectives to be established.

Finally, scholars such as Montero & Morris (1999) observe the importance of local culture in shaping territorial development processes and governance models. In places where the local culture is based on innovation, entrepreneurship, cooperation, association activity, etc., these processes will be more successful. In Bonares, there is a strong culture of entrepreneurship based on cooperativism, which has been present since the 1950s. This entrepreneurial spirit can be seen in private actors, who have created cooperatives, and in the local public institutions, which have encouraged the creation of COOPINTE and opened a nursery school, a day centre and a housing cooperative.

Conclusion

Since the 1980s, different models of territorial governance have emerged on the initiative of local groups and public institutions. However, the vast majority of these attempts to organise (partnerships, public enterprises, joint ventures, etc.) have failed.

According to the literature review, there are a series of factors underpinning successful governance models, which include flexibility, functionality and versatility; the ability to redistribute power between actors; the ability of the public authorities and institutions to innovate and remain open to change; training and a local culture based on collaboration and entrepreneurship, and the model's ability to become a stable organisational structure endorsed by and involving the public institutions but unaffected by party political concerns.

This study reveals the existence of territorial governance models based on cooperativism, which effectively encompass all these variables, helping to stimulate successful local development processes in which sustained public-private participation serves as a valid management method that may provide a model for use in other locations.