

Expanded abstract

Listening to women: cooperatives and social and solidarity associations as a support network, a Brazilian example

Objectives

The objective of this article is to identify if the EES can be part of a support network for women, from the perspective of those who are part of the EES, reflecting on the generation of income for financial autonomy and a support network in case of patrimonial violence. To do this, a section of the Brazilian reality was made, investigating the EES of women in the municipality of Araraquara, in the interior of the state of São Paulo, a section made because it is a municipality with an important history of the social movement and public policies. aimed at the Social and Solidarity Economy (Paiva & Silva, 2020).

The discussion about the empowerment and autonomy of women is extremely important when we talk about equal opportunities between men and women and, as Simon, Serva and Andion (2024) say, this debate continues on the agenda, especially in countries in the global south. , like Brazil. Just as Tarditti, Samper and Rivera-Ferre (2021) point out, an explanatory factor for the emergence of socioeconomic innovations (such as the EES) is an “ethical or ideological drive” (Tarditti, Samper & Rivera-Ferre, 2021, p. 150), that is what Paiva and Silva (2020) demonstrate to be what happens in Araraquara due to their options for conducting public policies. This justifies the objective of this work.

The focus of the work is on informal support networks and patrimonial violence because, as seen in works that deal with the Brazilian reality, such as Oliveira (2013), Loreto, Teixeira and Sousa (2013) and Santos Bugai and Karpinski (2022)), there is underreporting of cases of violence against property, especially in cases of domestic violence (which accompanies other types of violence). Likewise, patrimonial violence generates the opposite of women’s autonomy and means that, in cases where it is not noticed, the victim of other violence continues to be in a situation of vulnerability due to economic dependence (Baptista, 2020; Moura, Silva & Machado, 2019; Defending the autonomy of these women is important because it is needed “to make changes in their own lives, through the capacity and power required to participate and influence decision-making, in addition to enjoying the same rights as men and to be able to live without violence” (Verzosi & Carvajal, 2023, p. 83).

Methods

A priori, a narrative-integrative bibliographic review was carried out, since it allows us to search for information from empirical and theoretical research, combining data and experi-

ences to base this work in the next part: a case study. It is capable of exploring a singular case or a set of cases (be it a sector, families or, in this case, a group of people who live similar realities - of being in a women's EES in Araraquara/SP), according to Chiazotti (2006) and is carried out based on an interview, since "at the root of the in-depth interview is the interest in understanding the experience lived by other people and the meaning that they give to that experience." (Seidman, 2006, p. 9).

The case study was combined with census data requested from the Public Incubator of Creative and Solidarity Economy of Araraquara, to obtain socioeconomic questions about cooperative members and associates, from the Incubator's own database, without any type of identification of the respondents, in order to obtain factual information. Luna (1999) defines factual information as easy to interpret, while opinion information requires more careful questioning and interpretation to decode what the respondent is saying.

The semi-structured interview model was chosen because it prioritizes the freedom of the interviewees to speak fluently and freely, but supported in a way that makes it possible to compare the data obtained, so that, according to Flick (2004), the interviewees can express their opinions better than in structured interviews. Among the types of semi-structured interviews, the one that came closest to the research objectives was the problem-focused interview, which, according to Flick (2004), focuses on a socially relevant problem and is interested in the subjective understanding that interviewees have this problem.

The results were analyzed from the responses obtained in the interviews, using Content Analysis, more specifically the line based on Bardin (2011) and supported by Richardson, Peres, Wanderley, and Peres (1999), thinking about the characteristics of the statements made in the interviews. Content analysis is not very common in economics (Milan, Möller and Wobeto, 2022), but it has been used in studies that have interviewed women to learn their perspective on gender issues (Zancan, Wassermann and Lima, 2013; Perucchi and Beirão, 2003; Kind et al, 2013).

Results

Socioeconomic data was collected from 59 women (cis and trans). Data were collected from women from the Morada Car, Pannels Unidas, Sol Nascente and Vitória Multiserviços cooperatives, as well as from the Mãos Que Criam and Associação das Mulheres Assentadas (Padoka) associations.

Regarding the income obtained from working in the EES, 26 women declared that they received less than the Brazilian minimum wage, two received the minimum wage and 31 received more than the minimum wage. The average monthly income of these women is approximately 1,447.15 reais.

For 49 women (83% of those surveyed) this monthly income is their main income, while for nine women it is a complementary income and one woman did not answer this question. Furthermore, only four women responded that no one else besides them depends on this income from the EES, while all of the other 55 have one or more people (other than themselves) who depend on this income, with the average being approximately two people.

Thinking about the possibility of introducing women into the labor market from the SSE, as Gaiger (2007) and Paiva (2017) write, and the generation of their autonomy as Telles & Leopoldino (2024), Simon, Serva and Andion (2024), Versozi and Carvajal (2023) and Arando, Elio and Marcuello (2024), were also asked if these women had income before joining the ESS. 35 women (59.3% of those surveyed) answered negatively to this question, while 24 stated that they had income before, of which 18 women (three quarters) received income from public aid and only six women (one quarter) They had a job (two were self-employed and four worked under a formal contract).

But in addition to guaranteeing the income of these women, it is important that they can decide what to do with it, whether or not to continue in the SSE and what to do with their lives autonomously, that is, guarantee financial and social autonomy. Next, the results of the interviews carried out with the cooperative members and associates will be shown, in order to capture their perception of the SSE, their relationship with it and with the other women who make it up, as well as to be able to perceive subjective issues on the topic. of support network and domestic violence (especially domestic violence) in a way that statistical data cannot.

Of the 12 women invited to participate in the interview, 11 responded to the questions, so this case study counts 11 responses, so we can understand the limitations of the research, since it was carried out with a small group of women who met the requirements listed in the methodology.

It was possible to obtain results that explain what happens in the empirical field in relation to the theory. Firstly, 10 of the women interviewed stated that they have friendships with other women that go beyond the work relationship, and all of them considered the SEE as a safe space for dialogue and said they felt welcomed by the other associates/cooperators. That is to say, the EES is really an environment where women can exchange and have complicities.

Bardin's Content Analysis methodology was used to investigate the responses to the question of whether or not women were aware of support networks. The result of this question was that only three of the women interviewed had no knowledge of what a support network was, only one of them used a formal network device as part of their answer (the "health" of the municipality) and three Of them they cited other women from the EES as part of their support network.

When it comes to complaints about relationships in which a partner/cooperator feels diminished or threatened in some way, only two responded affirmatively. However, when asked about not being able to decide about their own money or even having their partner prevent them from working, seven responded affirmatively, leading to the reflection that five women do not see patrimonial violence as a form of threat or decline of women. Of the women interviewed who complained about domestic violence, five said that something had been done to change the situation, but in all situations it was either talking to the husband to convince him to allow the woman to work or trying to finding ways for the woman to reconcile work with the "demands" of the relationship. In fact, one of the women says that she has no say in another person's relationship.

Because there were only 11 women answering the interview questions and 59 to the socioeconomic questionnaire, a limitation of the work is representativeness, therefore, it is an example of a Brazilian reality because it is a Brazilian city, but the research cannot be taken for the entire reality of EES women from all over Brazil. Likewise, the research is very important and paves the way for discussion and future research that could address how EES serve as support networks in other aspects of domestic violence or even if mixed EES (with men and women) also serve as support network for women victims of domestic violence.