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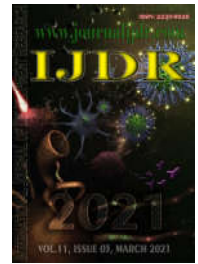
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SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY NETWORKS MAPPING AND THE STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY OF ENTERPRISES IN BRAZIL

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ABSTRACT

The social analysis of networks is an important aspect in the strategic planning of solidarity cooperation units, productive chains and territorial and sectoral economic arrangements for production, marketing, and consumption, providing them with the condition to improve their activities and the sustainability of the enterprises. With the analysis of the networks, it is possible to reveal some morphological characteristics capable of assisting decision makers on the objectives to be achieved on a local or global geographic scale, and in the development of intervention projects of greater efficiency and adequacy of resources. Based on data collected in construction workshops and analysis of solidarity economy cooperation networks, the present study aims to present strategic planning models using the mapping of collaboration networks as a support element for the organization of economic enterprises affiliated with the productive sector of the solidarity economy. The results collected in this study suggest that the use of planning tools, dimensioned based on the mapping of the productive units, provide a strategic, tactical, and operational vision, allowing the networks to be observed from the articulations between the solidarity economic enterprises, spatially distributed, and its support organizations, focusing in achieving sustainable territorial development in which they are fundamental elements.

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INTRODUCTION

The Social and Solidarity Economy - SSE refers to the production of goods and services by a wide range of organizations and enterprises that have concomitant and interdependent economic, social, and environmental objectives, and that are guided by principles and practices of cooperation, solidarity, ethics and democratic self-management (Singer, 2002). SSE field includes rural and urban cooperatives and other forms of social enterprise, help groups, community organizations, workers' associations in the formal and informal economy and Non-Governmental Organizations - NGOs that provide services, solidarity finance initiatives, among others (Morais, 2013, 2014). At the present time, SSE is considered by the United Nations as one of the auxiliary paths that can contribute to the build of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda (United Nations, 2015). Out of the 17 Objectives foreseen in the Agenda, the goals 01 - Eradication of poverty, 05 - Gender equality, 08 - Decent work and Economic growth, 10 - Reduction of inequalities and 11 - Sustainable cities and communities, especially, are identified with the SSE guidelines. In addition, both the SDGs and SSE value the economic, social, and environmental dimensions

of sustainable territorial development, assuming a systemic configuration that goes beyond the individual or private: networks and their multidimensional interactions (Maciel & Ferrarini, 2020). And by involving micro and macroeconomic issues in their dynamics, local and global perspectives, they indicate that the concept of cooperation networks may prove to be of fundamental importance for the strengthening of SSE practices and the achievement of the SDGs. Notably for the rescue and consolidation of institutions and agents located in the rural environment, such as small agricultural production units, family farmers and non-conventional production, that become more solid the more organized and structured in networks. Networks concern the connections established by interdependence bonds built over time, presenting the common identity of the points and the continuity of the flows of interests that link the actors (Castells et al., 2007). As well as in mathematics studies, where the object of the research might not necessarily be numbers, but the relationships between them, in the study of social networks the focus on the connections between people, things and objects; places, spaces and agents; organizations, institutions and policies (Freeman, 2012). Considering that the distinctive character of social life is its fluidity, mobility and continuous transformation, a

social enterprise or organization of any nature can only be sustainable if it accomplishes its objectives, its function, what it was historically built for, in a continuous way and stable, avoiding deviations, threats or risks that could compromise its existence in the medium and long term (Hamu & Costa, 2003). In a broader sense, by configuring themselves in the form of networks, economic enterprises that individually would have difficulties to survive and continue to exist, are strengthened, or become more viable if the spaces of their action and the continuity of exchanges are expanded and, therefore, the social assumptions of collaboration (Reyes Junior et al., 2011). This is a condition that is most noticeable in the context of family farming and small rural producers. Even though these relationships are solidified in points, material or not, their existence is consolidated because they collaborate with each other, connect, and complement each other with other institutions, actors and agents of the production and consumption network of goods and services, creating bonds of interdependence and material and/or symbolic exchanges with reciprocal benefits.

Carolina Andion (2005, p. 80) highlights that the “specificity of organizations of the so-called solidary economy” presupposes “also particular forms of interaction among its members and between them and the external environment, as well as singular logics of treatment of economic and technical activities”. Which means demanding your own forms of management. Regarding the interests of agents or units in interaction, within the restricted scope of economic and solidarity enterprises, the main strategic challenge of management is to encourage the organization of sustainable territorial systems that, if on the one hand, can strengthen individual identities, on the other hand, enable the permanent exchange of a collaborative and non-competitive nature with the other units of the network. For the set of such enterprises, the main parameters for decision making are the economic, social, and environmental conformations existing in the territory. These allow the creation of objective conditions for the permanence of populations in their places of origin, especially when talking about the cooperation networks of the social and solidarity economy that privileges the youngest and economically vulnerable (Singer, 2002). If the condition of existence, objective or target of organizations is their sustainability, strategic planning is a necessary and valid resource.

Planning is the determination of a set of procedures and actions by the organizations, aiming at the realization of some project, especially in the economic and social areas (Ferreira, 1999). Strategically planning means choosing the potentially most effective method to achieve the intended objectives, within the limits of a possible scenario, using the available resources. It allows a margin of anticipation of changes, taking advantage of what they bring best (opportunities); it allows it to continue to exist when the sense of change can come to harm by destabilizing organizations (Pereira, 2010). The strategic planning in collaboration networks of the solidarity economy, although following the same conceptual guidelines applicable to other productive activities, has characteristics quite different from the economic organizations typical of competitive capitalism (Singer, 2001). Their practices suggest a management style specific to these organizations (Andion, 2005). It is claimed in this text that the social analysis of collaboration networks contributes decisively to the strategic planning of the typical enterprises of the social and solidarity economy. The proposition is justified and makes sense as the solidarity economy networks present different aspects from commercial networks, especially regarding the importance of the strength of the ties between the actors. Seeking to achieving sustainability in the networks and territorial spaces of collaboration of the Social and Solidarity Economy that it was required for the group of organizations analyzed to plan strategically. The main objective of the article is, therefore, to present and discuss a model of strategic planning and mapping of collaborative networks that, considering the multidimensionality of sustainability, become elements of support for the organization of networks of economic enterprises affiliated to the productive sector of the solidarity economy investigated. The study is presented in five main sections: the first, introduction, is intended to contextualize the investigation

and to present the proposed objectives. The second, literature review, addresses the specifics of strategic planning in solidary network configurations and the third, the methodological approach adopted. In the fourth section, an approach is made on the contribution that the analysis and mapping of social network structures bring to the sustainability of solidarity economic enterprises and the results and discussions of the analyzed data are shown. Lastly, the conclusions.

Literary Review

The strategic planning applied to solidarity cooperation networks, productive chains and territorial and sectoral economic arrangements for solidarity production, marketing and consumption provides an improvement in the sustainability of Social and Solidarity Economy Enterprises from the Sustainable Development in the Territories (Ortega, 2007). This concept of development designates actions to improve the living conditions of the population within the limits of the ecosystems' carrying capacity, integrating the social, economic, and environmental dimensions (Léna et al., 2012). It also allows to collectively build the management tools that enable the improvement of organizations and enterprises; share experiences, identify and systematize the demands of support networks and their productive chains (territorial economic arrangements) of solidarity production, commercialization and consumption; and enable the integration and articulation of resources and efforts aimed at improving the sustainability of SEE and support networks (ADS - Agência de Desenvolvimento Solidário, 2014).

According to Falsarella and Jannuzzi (2017), strategic planning is related to strategic management, as it defines:

1. Vision of the future: as an organization, or enterprise, it seeks to be recognized after the elaboration and execution of the plan;
2. Mission: what is its broader purpose, the reason for its existence, and what type of activity will it focus on;
3. Strategic objectives: which objectives must be achieved over a period;
4. Goals: quantify and indicate deadlines for the objectives to be achieved;
5. Indicators: are variables that allow measuring whether the goals are being achieved or not;
6. Strategies: define courses of action to be taken in order to achieve the objectives;
7. Projects: created from the strategies and when finalized it is expected that the objectives and goals have been achieved.

Figure 1 represents the elements of strategic planning consisting of a vision, a mission, several strategic objectives and several targets, indicators, and strategies for each strategic objective.



Source: adapted from Falsarella and Jannuzzi (2017)

Figure 1. Elements of strategic planning

This concept, although used in other productive activities, can also be applied in solidarity cooperation networks, since it is possible to make a Diagnosis (strategic level); establish a Political Guideline (tactical level); and the Action Plan (operational level):

1. The Diagnosis identifies the starting point, or analysis, from which all planning is built. It is configured from the answers given to the following questions: Who am I? What do I do best? What is my differential? What is my biggest challenge?
2. The Policy Guideline is based on answers that identify the objectives and expected results: What kind of approach should I use to face each of my challenges? Starting from where I am, where do I want to go? What results to achieve in the end? Which indicators will show the correctness or not of my choices?
3. The Action Plan is based on the following question: What is the set of actions that I must carry out to achieve the intended objectives, according to the selected guideline? And the observation on the coherence and relevance of the actions to be taken.

Among the guiding axes for the construction of planning tools, the following concepts and practices applicable to solidary economic enterprises can be considered: (a) concepts of sustainable territorial development; (b) development of networks, chains and productive arrangements; (c) the relations of production and consumption between the countryside and the city, through the structuring of cooperatives; (d) conversion of traditional agriculture into organic, agroecological and agroforestry agriculture as a market differential and healthy living; (e) political action of the SSE in the territories' political life through participation in popular councils in the territories and dispute of public policies; (f) the role of women and young people in the SSE; (g) symbolic dimension of the solidarity economy (cultures in the territories); (h) strengthening local and territorial forums for the solidarity economy; (i) continuous training of SSE technical and political staff; (j) construction of local political relations for fostering SSE (universities, incubators, civil society organizations, among others) (ADS - Agência de Desenvolvimento Solidário, 2014). It is a complex set of ideas, practices, and relationships between parties, not all under the control of planners. Aligned with the organization of the various factors, some authors (Buarque, 2006; Lafer, 2003; Pereira, 2010) consider important to separate the set into four levels of analysis: (i) the immediate, which corresponds to the individual or organizational unit (LEVEL 1); (ii) the internal environment, which includes the structure, individuals and similar organizational units or with which the units interact with relative steadiness (LEVEL 2); (iii) the external environment, which comprises the structure, individuals and organizational units in which the units interact sporadically or indirectly (LEVEL 3); (iv) the relationship that is generated (network) between the individual, and the internal and external environment (LEVEL 4).

METHODS

Methodologically, it is a theoretical-empirical study, built and grounded on situations and experiences reported by the management entities of the cooperation networks that are part of the Networks Project: Steps to Sustainability I and II, developed since 2014 by Solidary Development Agency in partnership with the National Secretariat for Solidarity Economy of the Ministry of Labor (SENAES / MT) (ADS - Solidary Development Agency, 2014). The data and information used were collected in strategic planning workshops held in July, October, and November 2018, with the managers of 11 networks of cooperatives and associations of rural and urban enterprises in the Social and Solidary Economy, affiliated to the Network Project. For the systematization of the collected data, Excel (Microsoft), Ucinet 6.0 and NetDraw (Borgatti et al., 2014) and QGIS (QGIS Development Team, 2016) were used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Social Network Mapping (SNM) model presented here was built with the objective of assisting the decision making of the managers of the entities that are part of the Networks for Sustainability II Project, of the Solidary Development Agency (2014). For that, the model

was organized in three stages: 1) What is that? 2) What is that used for? 3) Practical applications for management entities; and 4) Social analysis of a marketing SNM.

What is a Social Network Mapping?

It consists of a set of techniques and methods that enable the visual identification of a social network, having both fixed and flows in the same work plan. Fixed assets are all kinds of things transformed by man (Santos, 2007), such as enterprises, institutions, entities, organizations, etc. and man himself as a social agent of this network, flows are everything that circulates between these fixed, in interpersonal relationships (Poudel et al., 2015), such as information, goods, money, etc. As human networks, unlike a telecommunication network or computer network, have a life of their own (Christakis & Fowler, 2010), more than one tool is needed for an assertive reading and interpretation of data.

What is a Social Network Mapping used for?

In Geography, a map can be understood as an instrument capable of representing and/or reproducing a reality in a certain area/niche/segment, in order to obtain information about the reality being mapped. A mapping of social networks consists of a graphical representation of a network of people, making it possible to view information about the relevance, impact, and influence of each landline (people, institutions, things) in the network as a whole. The SNM, in this perspective, works with interdisciplinary concepts to achieve its main objective, which is to provide information that facilitates the decision making of those who use it. As the Redes II Project consists, among other things, in an action for the consolidation and strengthening of solidarity economy networks, understanding who the social agents are, mobilizers, institutions, entities of greatest relevance and influence for each of the aspects of SSE is fundamental for assertiveness in decision-making processes regarding strategic support for the actions of the management entities. For the management entities, the effort to carry out a mapping of social networks will foster, to the responsible staff, necessary information to fill gaps and clear bottlenecks that prevent the full development of projects that provide autonomy to their respective solidarity economic enterprises.

To gather information for the construction of the mapping of social networks, it begins with the identification of two of its main aspects: a) the nature of the SNM and b) the initial scale of the SNM. Nature is the aspect guided by the flows and determines which result to expect from this SNM. For example: a) if it is the nature of the SNM to provide information for fundraising, it is possible to extract from that SNM fundamental information about the support organizations, the institutional ties and to point out who are the reference persons who have greater influence to negotiate financing; b) if nature is the strengthening of commercialization of enterprises, an SNM provides information on the positioning of distribution channels, possible bottlenecks and intermediaries, distance between suppliers and consumers, in addition to pointing out facilitators in the circulation of products and services; c) if it is political training, an SNM makes it possible to identify and classify the mobilizers and the respective spaces for debate; d) if it is management, the identification and classification of the chain managers for greater efficiency in the transmission of information. Scale is the aspect guided by the fixed and which determines where to start a SNM, which means, by which fixed will the composition begin. The scales can be determined in different ways, being, for example, spatial (global, continental, national, regional, local), administrative actors (international, federal, state, municipal, enterprise), temporal (years, semesters), quarters, months, days, hours). There is no basic rule for assembling a scale, it must be determined according to the needs of each management entity and each question to be answered. From the point of view of commercialization, an SNM serves as a tool to show all the agents, social agencies, projects, supporters, institutions, and other organizations in the surroundings of the enterprises that compose these entities in the same plan and be able to define strategies to

enhance actions for the consolidation of commercialization within specific value chains, or even to propose the work of complementary value chains together. Expanding this understanding to other factors, such as fundraising, political training and management, in Table 1, during the workshops with the management entities of solidarity economy cooperation networks, SNM situations were exposed for each of the scales of planning within the natures mentioned here.

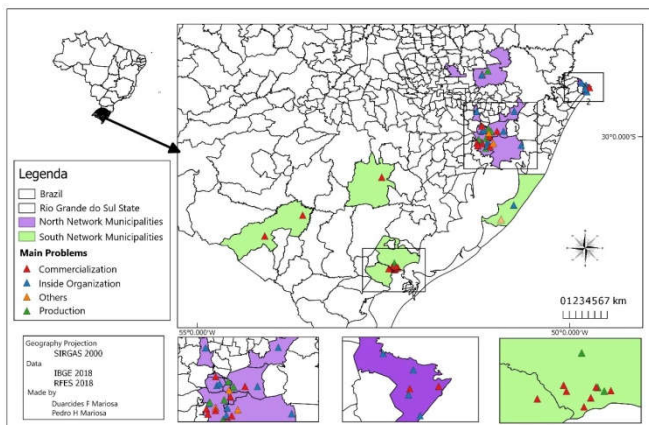
Table 1. Example of distribution and articulation between the objectives of Nature, Scale and Purpose of a Network Mapping

Nature	Scale	SNM Goal
Fundraising	Strategic	Identification of the main national and international funding sources for long-term projects
	Tatic	Identification of gaps for the development of regional institutional bonds with the objective of promoting medium-term projects
	Operational	Identification and classification of enterprises that operate in similar and/or complementary branches to form units of greater representation
Commercialization	Strategic	Identification of the main universal marketing channels and marketing support entities; identification of institutional market niches; distribution of marketing networks
	Tatic	Identification of the main value chains and representative entities for the establishment of cooperation; identification of regional market niches
	Operational	Identification of the different types of projects in the same territory and points of sale in common; identification of suppliers and potential customers
Political Formation	Strategic	Identification of the main consulting entities; identification of spaces for debate at national and international level; gaps in the participation of national councils
	Tatic	Proximity of entities and people by conceptual affinity for the establishment of dialogue; gaps in the participation of state councils
	Operational	Identification of the social agents of political leadership in the territories; identification of gaps for proposing political training workshops
Management	Strategic	Identification of network / chain managers for the conceptual alignment of the tactical level; identification of potentialities and deficiencies in strategic processes
	Tatic	Identification of support institutions that affect regional management processes
	Operational	Identification of intercooperation between different enterprises to improve management processes through the exchange of experiences

Source: elaborated by the authors based on indications from participants in the strategic planning and network mapping workshops held in 2018.

What are the practical applications of SNM for managing entities?

In this topic, models of image/visual representation of the mapping of social networks are presented and some hypotheses about the information that can be extracted to assist in decision making regarding each of the suggested natures: fundraising, marketing, political training, and management. By spatializing the enterprises that are part of the Solidarity and Feminist Economy Network in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, as shown in Figure 2, it is possible for the network managers to observe the main elements in which the difficulties indicated by the entrepreneurs are grouped, in this case, commercialization, organization, production and others. It also verifies the nature of the predominant objective of the network, involving business cooperation, gender policies and affirmative social actions, and the way they are gathered in the State of Rio Grande do Sul.



SOURCE: Elaborated by the authors from surveys carried out and provided by RFES, during the workshops held in 2018.

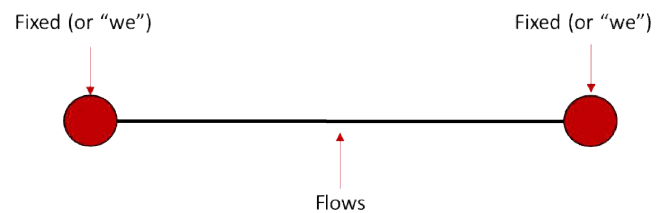
Figure 2. Mapping of Solidarity Cooperation Networks

As for the level of Planning applied to the Solidarity and Feminist Economy Network, we have:

- Strategic Planning:** identifies the organizational challenges, defines the forms of approach and the necessary actions for its solution in a continuous way and under a long-term and sustainable perspective. At this level of planning, the focus is on the relationships between the entrepreneurial units, the specific conditions of production, consumption and the forms of local organization and performance and the environment created by these relationships in the state level (LEVEL 4);
- Tactical Planning:** specifies the objectives to be achieved, the resources necessary for their implementation, the schedule for their execution and the ways of monitoring and evaluating partial results in a medium-term perspective. At this level of planning, the focus is on the guidelines that guide the individual's actions in the external environment (state) (LEVEL 3);
- Operational Planning:** focuses on the execution of the daily tasks necessary to fulfill the goals and objectives previously defined in the tactical and strategic plans. At this level of planning, the focus is on the actions to be taken in the internal environment (entrepreneurial units and the local environment) (LEVEL 1 and LEVEL 2).

Social Analysis of a Commercialization SNM: There follows an analysis of SNM of Cooperation nature at Strategic level, with the purpose of identifying universal marketing channels and support entities (networks) for enterprises in the South region of Brazil.

Elements of the SNM: In a network mapping, as shown in Figure 03, the identification of the landmarks is done by Points (represented by geometric shapes such as circles, squares, triangles) and the flows by Lines that connect one landmark to another.

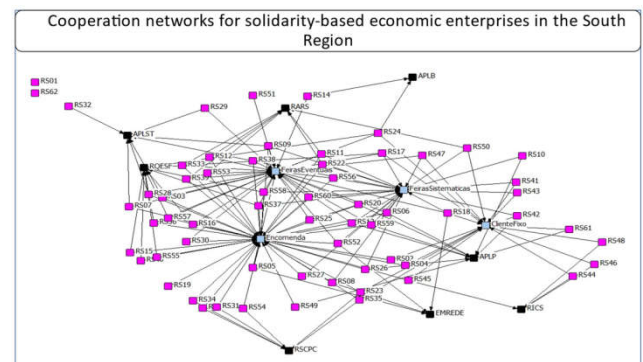


Source: elaborated by the authors based on (Borgatti et al., 2014)

Figure 3. Representation of the Fixed and Flows of a Network Map

To guide the reading of the SNM of the solidarity-based economic enterprises in the South region, Figure 04, the FIXED are arranged in:

- Pink for enterprises, represented by letters and numbers;
- Black, for the networks to which the projects belong, represented by an acronym.
- In Blue, the main customers mentioned by the projects are represented (Fixed customer, occasional fairs, systematic fairs, and orders).



Source: elaborated by the authors based on indications from participants in the strategic planning and network mapping workshops held in 2018.

Figure 4. Mapping of cooperation networks for solidarity-based economic enterprises in the South Region

The lines (flows) represent the places (black for the network, light blue for commerce) where people from each of the projects (in pink) mentioned using it.

Interpretation of the SNM: In this network mapping (Figure 04) there are some relevant information for the decision maker on the main points where the projects are related:

- a) There are 4 points of commercialization: 1) Eventual Fairs; 2) Systematic Fairs; 3) Ordering; 4) Fixed customer.
- b) There are 8 networks, represented by abbreviation acronyms.

Visually, the mapping shows that all projects are connected to at least one marketing point, or one network, except for two, in the upper left corner, RS01 and RS62. These fixed points without connection are the isolated ones. As an SNM is a graphic representation that supports decision making, in this case, it is up to the management entity to take immediate action to integrate these isolated enterprises into at least one network, or a marketing space. Another issue concerns enterprises linked to the networks represented by the acronyms APLST, RQESF, RARS and RSCPC, which tend to sell at occasional fairs and orders.

Those linked to the EMREDE, APLP and RICS networks are linked to fixed customers and systematic fairs. In this case, it can be said that there is the possibility of cooperation between enterprises not only from the same network, but from different networks to enhance their representativeness, as a unit (entity) in certain spaces. In the latter case, the decision maker may decide, for example, to promote a meeting for the exchange of experiences and identification of the fairs that the projects are already part of, enabling the use of spaces already consolidated and that work with enterprises of similar profile, thus avoiding the expenditure of resources for leasing or structuring new spaces. The same can be idealized in the second group, about systematic fairs, for example. Therefore, the social analysis of networks makes it possible to visualize tactical and operational paths that increase strategic planning.

CONCLUSION

Considering the potential risks and threats to the sustainability of solidarity-based economic enterprises, the permanence of populations in the territory and the possibility of economic and social insertion based on the generation of income and work, the greatest challenge seems to combine the social networks function of cooperation with social policies and territorial development strategies that also consider the geopolitical context, as this establishes and prioritizes economic, public, and social policy issues and the organizational problems of local populations. As suggested here, with theoretical arguments and examples brought by entities that manage cooperation networks for solidarity-based economic enterprises, the use of strategic planning tools can be aided by mapping production units, in a strategic, tactical, and operational view, allowing the networks to be observed from the articulations between the solidarity economic enterprises and their support organizations.

An analysis of social networks, in the first instance, allows to identify not only the potential common points, but also the divergent and gaps, enabling the decision makers of the managing entities to outline more assertive strategies to connect enterprises, networks and support institutions. As developed in this study, the Solidarity Economy Networks have different characteristics from commercial networks, mainly in the strategic value of the links between the actors. The social analysis of networks helps exactly at this point, the mapping of connections. Therefore, it is considered justified that the instruments presented contribute to support the construction and analysis of indicators and planning tools. However, new studies covering other networks and enterprises of the solidarity economy must be developed so that the methodological indications presented here acquire theoretical strength.

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