

HOUSING COOPERATIVES IN CHILE, COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES, AND SDG

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"Rethinking co-operatives: From local to global and from the past to the future"

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ABSTRACT.

Cooperative ethics are discursive of social responsibility, their values are permanent; although their principles are permanent they are not immutable, and they are all centered on the person, while their application adapts to the environment and the changes in society where they provide their services or contribute the goods they produce in a framework of requirable minimums guided by the International Cooperative Alliance.

To reinforce the development of cooperatives in the world they must be identifiable by their values, principles, and objectives, which were recently revised at the World Cooperatives Congress in Seoul.

It is advisable to look at their practice periodically; this paper is an analytical view of some principles and their meaning in big housing cooperatives in Chile.

1. KEYWORDS.

Ethics, cooperative Principles, values, objectives, centrality of the person.

2. PROBLEMATIZATION.

In Chile business activity in general is organized according to the concepts of neocapitalist liberal economics, focusing its activity on obtaining the highest profitability from capital with the highest earnings for its shareholders.

This objective was introduced in the second half of the 1970's when the Chilean economy aimed at replacing people as the main focus of its activities with profitability and growth of GDP and capital.

At that time housing cooperatives ceased to have access to short-term credit for construction and urbanization and to long-term mortgages.

In that environment in order to keep people who suffered from a lack of housing at the core of its activity and using economic and financial resources as a means of overcoming poverty, professionals dedicated to the development of housing cooperatives promoted several cooperatives made up of partners in poor emerging segments who needed housing, multisectoral professionals who worked in this area, and a couple of foundations, merging them into big Cooperatives. This modality created 15 cooperatives to channel the savings of their members in solidarity, and

develop and build projects and designs with their participation in the decision-making process.

Over forty-seven years those cooperative organizations have produced housing for more than 250,000 families, who acquired their property overcoming poverty.

Only three of those big Cooperatives are still active.

In almost five decades, one of them has formed total assets of US\$ 90,000,000 mainly through the formation of undistributable reserves of more than 90%, with the capital contributed by members being only 9%. The assets play a social role in the sector that enables it to extend its activity throughout the nation.

I will present a phenomenological analysis of the practice of some cooperative principles in their sectoral application that, while complying without losing sight of the SDG, should be considered with the rigorosity of the standard of application and evaluative models that respond to the orientation of current ICA guidelines, the concepts accepted in academic research and specialized literature of the last 40 years, and the aspirations of local civility, maintaining the centrality of the person in all of their decisions and actions and adapting to the ethics that identify them as authentic cooperatives.

3. HYPOTHESIS.

Ethical values and principles.

In order for cooperatives to be identified as authentic it is necessary:

1st, for each and every one of their decisions and actions to be focused on the interests of people in all spheres of their relationship with their members, their workers, their directors and executives, their partners, and third parties affected by their surroundings or community and environment;

2nd, for their organization, decisions, and acts to be based on the values of:

self-help,

personal responsibility,

democracy,

equality, equity, and

solidarity, and to incorporate the principles of: voluntary and open membership, democratic management; democratic participation of their members; autonomy and independence; education, training and information; cooperation among cooperatives and concern for the community;

3rd, that the "other" personified in their members, the society of their environment including the State and their partners, identify the presence of the declared values and principles in their decisions and actions.

Identity.

The requirement to incorporate cooperative principles and their values makes it possible for a cooperative to identify itself and for others to identify it, because they build the ethics of cooperatives. It is only possible to recognize their identity when the declared characteristics are seen to be fundamental to their acts and decisions.

At the recent World Cooperative Congress in Seoul, Korea the concern about developing cooperative identity was brought up repeatedly with the goal of having the cooperative movement be identified as the alternative that can build a better world, in accordance with the times, so that everyone can find an activity there that responds sustainably in every sphere to his/her needs and demands, centralizing the person in solidarity as the beginning and the end, and putting the economy, profitability, growth, innovation, natural resources, and human abilities at his/her service.

The identified entity (cooperative x) should be identified as well as those who are related to it, especially when they are affected by its acts or decisions. Whoever identifies himself/herself that way also says who he/she is because it is recognized. The affected parties that identify a cooperative say that it is a cooperative, because they recognize cooperative values and principles in its acts.

Cooperative Principles

According to the ICA "cooperative principles are guidelines according to which cooperatives put their values into practice" (ICA, 2015, 2). Cooperative principles provide orientation about incorporating the values described in their actions and decisions. They are applicable guidelines with the adaptations required by the political, social, cultural, historical environment of the society or the environment in which the cooperative develops. The principles have varied in their declaration and in their number from their origin to the present time, maintaining the strength of their values.

ICA states that the principles must adapt to the characteristics of societies according to their expressions in time and space.

"Despite these general changes in the world, the foundations of the cooperative company remain unaltered. The generic essence of what makes a cooperative company a cooperative is as strong and relevant to the economic, social, and environmental quality of present human society as it was when the cooperative founders used it for the first time in the XIX and XX centuries. Our values are unalterable, but the application of cooperative principles needs constant reevaluation that accompanies economic, social, cultural, environmental, and political changes and challenges." (ICA, 2015, 2)

The meaning of cooperatives that develop on all of the continents and in all of the cultures in the world is always the same, which is not to say that in practice the principles may not be expressed differently at each time and in each place.

The world cooperative organization reminds us that *"Cooperatives are the only kind of company that has a code of ethical values agreed internationally that operates democratically and internationally according to accepted principles."* (ICA, 2015, 2)

A code we accept that requires us to uphold the ethics universally that we are identified with by partners and third parties, because this kind of company has agreed on them universally as ours by rational conviction and personal and collective learning not because of dogmatic imposition. There is no other kind of company that has been capable of achieving universal acceptance of an ethic.

The values ⁱ I mentioned above are permanent, and the principles, although permanent, are not immutable. The cooperative should respond to the ethics that reflect its values capturing in its principles the requirements of its internal sectors and the society it serves, that it relates to.ⁱⁱ

Universally, commercial and economic relationships have considered the disequilibrium between the attribution of rights and the unequal distribution of goods to be the biggest problem.ⁱⁱⁱ

I limit this presentation under that conception, analyzing compliance by the big housing cooperatives in Chile with the following three cooperative principles:

democratic control;

education, training and information and

interest by the community in achieving the following three SDG: end of poverty; gender equality, and quality education.

3.1. End of poverty.

In seeking compliance with the first Sustainable Development Goal - SDG-, contained in Agenda 2030 approved in the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, I will understand "end of poverty" as *ending poverty in all its forms throughout the whole world*, to be limited to contributing to overcoming the phenomenon of poverty in the country as a challenge of equity and integration. This should be dealt with from a multidimensional perspective in order to understand it, look at it, and measure it, which assumes the cooperative, organized, and comprehensive participation of many cooperative players among others, always maintaining the dignity of those who suffer from being part of the phenomenon as the main focus.^{iv}

Poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon involving the lack of necessary goods to survive expressed in different areas of peoples' lives, like: decent access to culture, education, health, work, inclusion, transportation, electricity, religious practice, freedom of expression and information, IT and the media, sufficient healthy food, housing, and money;

with *aporophobia* being understood as rejection of the poor;

with social segregation and as Amartya Sen says with the lack of freedom and impossibility to carry out the plans that a person values for his/her life.

Overcoming poverty requires the multisectoral concurrence of people, cooperatives, and organizations that participate with their activity "*toward the reciprocal recognition of dignity and toward compassion that breaks down barriers and extends universally. That does not come inscribed in the genes, installed in the brain, but that we have drunk in cultural traditions that make it the humanizing experience par excellence.*" (Cortina, 81. 2017).

Contributing to ending poverty by the action of each cooperative means that it cooperates effectively to achieving a level where, under the sectoral perspective that its action is confined to in the case of this document, the poverty generated by a lack of access to housing and urban segregation of identifiable people expressed in housing that does not meet the minimum conditions can be registered as decent housing in the commonly acceptable concept or in the segregated neighborhood

where poor people live. Cooperative activity should consider a double goal, overcoming poverty in all of humanity and the poverty of every particular person.^v In Chile we had managed to reduce the lack of decent housing significantly, but this has been stopped in the last 4 years and even reverted.

3.2 Gender equality

At the World Cooperative Congress in Korea it was agreed not only to ratify the commitment of the cooperative movement to the SDG of the Agenda 2030, but also to measure how the SDG are addressed by compliance with each one of the Cooperative Principles.

As cooperatives focus on the dignity of humankind, they include men and women equally. The principles consider gender equality, and the difficulties start when the application of this goal “necessary to achieve a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world” (United Nations 2018.31) is measured effectively at different levels of the structure, in the decisions and actions of each cooperative.

Agreeing with this agenda I recognize that this goal will enable cooperatives to promote a solidary and sustainable economy benefiting societies and mankind.

Achieving this SDG by cooperatives involves ending all forms of discrimination against women; assuring their full and effective participation at all levels, and in their relationship to third parties, including reforms of rules that regulate their operation that explicitly grant women equality of rights to economic resources and access to property, to the management and control of each cooperative, free of inequities, inequalities, and abuses.

The opinions of specialized literature show us that the least homogenous boards are a threat to the appropriate decision-making process, posing risks to the independence of thought of the Group (Fouskas, 6); that women have better skills in relating to other organizations; that they are more likely to involve their companies in philanthropic and productive activities for the community.

The important point is that women should belong to all the levels of cooperatives with equal possibilities to men, because the centrality of cooperatives is based on people because of their innate quality without considering their gender, and it is urgent to eliminate the differences that prevent the participation of women and men in equal conditions and to create conditions that permit that equality. The human right of gender equality is interwoven with some of the cooperative principles, it is inherent, essential, and permanent to the cooperative nature.

3.3 Guaranteeing education.

One of the dimensions of the phenomenon of poverty is that it reduces the affected people to the condition of a human resource to create wealth, improve productivity, and increase the benefits of capital, forgetting that the centrality of the person puts economic activities and the use of goods at its service. The education guaranteed in the Agenda establishes that it is inclusive, equitable in quality, and universal, creating opportunities for learning.

It does not only refer to the education of children, it includes those who have to have alternatives to acquire instruments or skills in order to overcome poverty.

It seeks to assure equal access by 2030 to quality technical, professional, and higher training for those who have the necessary skills, in order to have access to decent work and to entrepreneurship for development and sustainable lifestyles, by means of access to human rights, gender equality, peace and non-violence, valuing cultural diversity.

In Cooperatives this guarantee signifies achieving the incorporation in its contemporary version of the principle of cooperative education, research, science and technology at all the levels that make up its structure, and the society of its environment.

Education includes the training of members willing to assume roles at higher levels of the cooperative in management and control in order for them to become competent to take on the sensitive tasks that the principle of democratic control requires.

The conceptual justification of the dedication that cooperatives must have to collaborate in the world effort proposed by the Agenda to comply with these three SDG among others is based on the meaning of cooperatives and on the express mandate of the Seoul Conference.

4. OBJECTIVES.

4.1 General objective.

By means of an analysis of the exercise of big housing cooperatives in Chile in a period of more than four decades, of the three cooperative principles indicated, I will show how under any socio-economic-political circumstance it is possible for the cooperative system to be disseminated and developed helping to meet the objective of the challenge of the three SDG of the Agenda 2030, always maintaining the centrality of achieving the ideal that “the other” challenges us, that his/her dignity be set forth by the cooperative in first place in the second person: his/her freedom; his/her freedom comes first. Ethical freedom is not a pretension that comes from every one of the cooperatives, its origin is the other that questions each one demanding that it be equal to the cooperative. The cooperative demands of each one of those who represent it that they consider the you, that other, like me, like me myself, like the cooperative itself making us consider ourselves in our relationship in the community of our environment in the sense of “I am my own neighbor, because I am the fellow human being of my neighbors” (Ricoeur, 2009; 143).

The cooperatives that I refer to in regard to their decisions and actions have achieved objectives beyond what was foreseen, having, under some perspective, accommodated to the limit some characteristics that, having been justifiable at one time, should be corrected in the future and adapted in a planned manner to the standards in order to identify themselves, distinguishing themselves from non-profit entities of another kind.

4.2 Specific objectives

J. Birchall describes that financial cooperatives have three essential elements that define them: property, control, and benefits. He also states that the member owners are in turn the clients.

The same three essential elements define Housing Cooperatives in Chile^{vi}, where the clients are the owners, resulting in the phenomenon of identity in the same person being the member owner of the cooperative and recipient of the service.

4.2.1 Democratic control.

What is democratic control?

ICA declares this principle saying that *“Cooperatives are democratic organizations under the control of their members, which participate actively in determining their policies and in decision-making. Men and women who serve as elected representatives are responsible regarding all of the members. In first-level cooperatives members have the same voting right (one member, one vote), and cooperatives of other levels are also organized democratically”* (ICA 2015, 17).

It contains a definition of the meaning of cooperatives concentrating on the fact that *“members of the cooperative meet in an organization.”* Not in a capital firm nor in a charitable foundation, corporation or other form of non-profit mutual benefit society. The phenomenon of identifying the owner of the cooperative and the recipient of the good or service as the same person, known as the identity criterion, is typical only of cooperatives;^{vii} the centrality that gives meaning to the cooperative is based on the members.

Characteristics of this principle

The first characteristic of the organizations derived from this principle is being democratic, implying that their members have responsibilities and rights backed by their obligations.

A characteristic that is required for its governance and for its administration. In governance from the right of all members to elect and be elected, to making decisions at each one’s organizational level, and for the organization, administration, and management of all spheres of activity. The second characteristic contained in this principle is the control of its members, which extends from the elemental *“four-eyes principle”* that Blomeyer calls *Vier Augen Prinzipien* for all operations of the cooperative (Blomeyer, 165) that the members exercise by right in the different activities where they relate to one another, or in the areas of its administration, investments, general or specific policies including the definition of products of goods or services, price policies, formation of reserves, new investments, proposal and election of candidates for positions at management levels, governance, control of compliance with goals or determination of territorial action of the cooperative, as well as being elected for those responsibilities.

The third characteristic is that the members elected to control and manage the cooperative are responsible to all the members for knowing how their interests are looked after, how the assets are administered, and the objective met.

The interests of the cooperative include the interests of different kinds of members, each one of whom has the same weight, whatever the amount of his/her capital contributions may be.

The fourth characteristic required for compliance with this principle is that the members have the same voting rights (one member, one vote). The centrality of the person is one of the traits that makes it possible to identify them, which is shown by the fact that their rights derive from their being a member, not from the amount of capital contributed, nor the volume of business that each one transacts with the cooperative.

This principle is not limited to elections of directors or other control bodies, or mere participation in general assemblies; it also includes the collegiality of the different powers assuring that entrepreneurial and corporate governance is democratic and egalitarian. The orientation of the main world cooperative authority states that:

“Democratic control by the members is not limited simply to formal procedures in general assemblies, it also includes the separation of powers, like in a modern State, with checks and balances exercised internally. These checks and balances are important in a cooperative” (ICA 2015, 20).

It underlies the democratic election of positions of representation on the Administrative Council, determination of policies, control of administration, and representation of third-party interests.

Those who exercise both management and administration of the Cooperative do so by mandate and in representation of the partners, so ICA warns in one of its most recent documents when reminding that *“cooperatives do not “belong” to the elected responsible persons any more than they can “belong” to the managers and employees who occupy positions that are subordinate to those responsible.”* (ICA, 2015, 18)

Moreover, members of the most senior management and managers are always subject to the members’ control bodies requiring that *“The agreements that are adopted shall guarantee effective and real democratic control by the members, instead of having theoretical democracy controlled by a management level or an elite that perpetuates itself.”* (ICA 2015, 19)

Do the big housing Cooperatives in Chile comply with this principle?

The control bodies and democratic internal management of Housing Cooperatives in Chile are determined by the law and bylaws of each cooperative. They are called the Administrative Council^{viii} and Supervisory Board^{ix}, and both of them are composed of members of the cooperative. In the former, each type of member elects the number of members according to its bylaws, as well as the ones elected by workers in the cooperative.

I will limit my analysis to the big housing cooperatives mentioned, through one of them, pointing out the experience, professional capacity, integrity, spirit of generosity, and vocation of service of the members of the Administrative Council. The Council is currently composed of nine members elected by two types of members and the workers, with each level electing its representatives separately, and only two of the members being women.

Regarding gender integration among the eight leading executives that do the multidisciplinary work required by a cooperative of this nature, there are no women, while gender integration among personnel shows 44% are women. The members generally are largely women.

Members of the administrative council, who are not employees, have been elected without being renewed for decades, with a few exceptions.

The Supervisory Board, whose functions are defined by law, is made up of members elected by the Board, most of whom are not trained by the cooperative to exercise their functions and comply with their task formally by means of an annual meeting. The exercise of governance is strongly personal, with the administrative council being involved in functions and decisions typical of management or administration.^x

Why?

The description is a view of the principle of democratic control in those cooperatives, and it should be established that the successful work of those Cooperatives in social, solidary, economic, financial, technical aspects contributes to the prestige achieved by cooperatives in public and private sectors, among the members, local authorities, civic community, and financial and bank sectors; the technology incorporated, the quality of construction, and the urban development achieved meet high standards of social integration and solidarity enabling them to be considered an outstanding benchmark for cooperatives in the public-private relationship in sectoral spheres of protected housing, workers' organizations, and the financial sector.

Nevertheless, there are other forms of semi-mutual organizations like charitable organizations, mutual benefit societies or foundations that achieve the same result without the participation of members who benefit from their efficient activity, but they are not cooperative. They consider their clients like members without including them in corporate governance or in the control exercised by a council, whose members, according to their internal rules, may remain in their positions perpetually.

The form of exercise of democracy in the elections, governance, administration, and control in reference is based on current internal and exogenous characteristics.

The internal ones include: the short period of membership in the cooperative, which is less than five years, they are no longer members once they acquire individual ownership of their houses, and members are not encouraged to assume responsibilities; and the high level of specialization and complexity of sectoral activity in specific financial, construction, legal, social, technical, and urban subjects that pertain to the real estate and social sectors, which do not correspond with the members' average educational level. The appropriate solution to those two characteristics has not been addressed.

The exogenous characteristics are: the environment of the cooperatives' origin, an environment that ended in 1990, the cooperatives were created in an adverse political environment that made any expression of solidary, democratic popular activities suspect; and the need to maintain the stability of the prestige gained with partners in different spheres that enable their development in the economic political system, and in the construction and real estate industries in which they are inserted.

Conclusion regarding compliance with democratic control.

The cooperatives comply formally with the letter of the rules contained in the law and internal bylaws.

According to the description provided, it is necessary to introduce practices that make it possible to comply with the meaning of this principle following the recommendations that ICA has defined precisely for its members, which is:

Have appropriate representation of the different interested members;^{xi}

Satisfy common needs;

Democratic control by members;

Separation of powers of the cooperative,^{xii} expressly “*like a modern State*”(Wilson, 20) exercising controls that represent a balance among all the groups of its members,^{xiii} without having members of the Administrative Council be involved in daily management;

Take advantage of communications and information technology to achieve the necessary training so that members can hold positions with more responsibility;^{xiv}

Let the administrative council supervise constant democratic renewal, presenting new member candidates for eligible positions;^{xv}

Let the elected members reflect the diversity of the members of the cooperative^{xvi} and gender parity;^{xvii}

The right of all members to vote and be elected to the Administrative Council and the Supervisory Board so that it is made up of members and they participate in strategic decisions;^{xviii}

Introduce changes that limit the re-election of elected councilors.^{xix}

The recommendations of ICA and academic publications that have described all these characteristics in other experiences will help in this case as in all cooperatives to update their democratic control practices in light of the universal concept of cooperative ethics that identifies them, supporting the achievements reached. Because ICA warns “*Without real and effective control by the members, an essential generic characteristic of our cooperative identity will be lost*” (International Alliance, 29).

4.2.2. Education, training and information

What is education, training and information?

The principles are the beginning, what comes first; when agreeing on their principles including this one, cooperatives establish that they are founded on the values I have mentioned, pointing out that these companies started by offering education.

Education is understood to teach the same cooperative values of democracy, equality, and solidarity.^{xx}

Three tasks state the current definition of this principle: Education; Training and Information.

The first two are in order to contribute efficiently to the development of the cooperative itself, aimed at the levels of its structure;

Members;

Elected representatives;

Managers; and

Employees.

Information about the nature and benefits of cooperation is aimed at the community in general, especially in its environment:

to young people and
to opinion leaders.

Education in itself is not a value, education teaches values. The cooperative company states that one of its principles is education, because it is a company that intends to teach the meaning of its values so they will be present in its decisions and actions, reflecting its identity: democracy, equality and solidarity.

What do we mean by education, training and information?

Education is an essential activity says our world organization, because the success and sustainability of cooperative companies is based on it; it is not a complementary activity or an activity carried out for commercial purposes, service or production that legally are the objective of the company.^{xxi}

The cooperative movement considers that education is essential so that the interests of its members and society will be achieved under the form of company indicated above.

Interpreting Birchall, when executives and senior management enter the cooperative they have not been trained to see its meaning, and they are not equipped with the precise kind of language necessary to value it or express it, if they did see it.

In order to participate actively in each one of the aspects involved in the actions of the cooperative it is essential to understand the meaning of equality, democracy and solidarity.

This principle refers to training in the meaning that cooperatives have to transmit to their staff so they will be identified by their ethics^{xxii} in the democratic corporate performance and transparent governance that is conducted for the dignity of the other.

The meaning of cooperatives is different from the meaning the market gives to companies, which makes it essential to train the managers, elected positions, senior executives, and all of the employees and professionals in the values, principles, and objectives that make it possible for all of their acts and decisions to reflect their identity.

Information, the third task of this principle, has the objective of disseminating the fact that the values that identify them produce benefits for the cooperative and local and global civil society in which they are inserted; they help efficiently to achieve peace, to overcome poverty, gender equality, care for the environment, and the replacement of individualistic practices with solidary ones,^{xxiii} overcoming difficulties to perfect the exercise of democratic control that has been described.

Do these cooperatives comply with this principle?

These cooperatives have been distinguished by the education of their members in the values of self-help, responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, and solidarity, but the problem is that they are not part of the average civic collective imagination now.

They have extended this activity beyond in-person sessions by means of printed documents, with Webinar and Zoom meetings, App and WhatsApp, not only to the typical fields of cooperation and information about its economic, financial, institutional, and cooperative development, but also to subjects involving technology, urban planning, financial and legal affairs, and construction, to improve their informed participation in business activity with the cooperative and civic activity with the community.

The education and information for members include what is necessary to participate symmetrically with the cooperative and with third parties participating in the acquisition of a house.

The following issues are addressed:

Civic and cooperative solidarity;

Cooperative principles, values, and foundations;

Financial issues related to the cooperative and to long-term mortgage financing, supporting them to be subjects of banking services;

Training of each one as an eligible subject for long-term mortgage financing; advising each one to incorporate all of their income into the formal system;

Economic matters related to the cooperative and the domestic family economy;

Savings for housing, which dignifies whoever makes the effort, and is the basis for financing by means of long-term loans;

Legal matters referring to the instruments necessary to acquire property and the meaning of property and public property;

Solidary civic behavior;^{xxiv}

Appreciation of the environment, in common subjects like the solidarity expressed in renewal, recovery, recycling, and repair, energy efficiency, care of water, of urban furniture, public squares and buildings;

Construction and technical subjects, like maintenance and home improvement, etc.

These tasks create strong ties involving participation among the members, workers, and professionals, as well as identification with the cooperative.

Conclusion about education, training, information.

Housing cooperatives usually develop specific programs of education, training and information aimed at their members, managers, employees, and professionals, the community, stakeholders, local and national sectoral authorities.

Interpreting compliance with this principle as a way of knowing the interests of the other in order to make people's dignity the center of their decisions and actions before any other objective or goal of their business, because this

principle is an effective instrument for cooperating in overcoming poverty, developing gender equality, achieving peace, replacing the priorities of the individualistic economic system with solidarity, equality, participation, and democracy, as well as coinciding with young people's ideals of a better world. ICA states that providing education and training for its members, elected representatives, administrators, and employees is an essential activity as it is fundamental to the success and sustainability of any cooperative. (International cooperatives Alliance, 2015. 64.)

4.2.3. Interest in the community.

"Cooperatives work in favor of the sustainable development of their communities by means of policies approved by their members." (International cooperatives Alliance, 91)

This principle incorporated in 1995 in the catalogue of cooperative principles is an expression of the cooperative ethic, practiced from the time of the first cooperatives in the UK and Germany that were concerned about the community in the members' environment. From that perspective those companies have meaning as a counterpoint to the ways followed by industry and commerce at the end of the 19th century.

They defined their ethos prioritizing the improvement of workers' social and economic conditions with the mutual aid of those who were vulnerable in urban communities because of the exploitation of labor, abusive retail, residential environmental neglect, precariousness of health and education services, etc.

The cooperative is concerned about the social environment from its very origins. It is not just the desire to satisfy a need that moves the cooperative that, as an association of people, democratically manages a company owned jointly by the same people who voluntarily want to be a part of it. (Martínez Chaterina, 36)

Cracogna states that the responsibility of cooperatives extends to improving conditions beyond their members to development of the local and universal community including nature, because its activity should be sustainable and include future generations.

How does the search for the well-being of cooperative members extend to the whole community? Because the well-being of members of a globalized society is best achieved by its extension to all of the others that contribute in some way or are affected by it.

I use two concepts of ICA here:

The values of self-help and responsibility for oneself and the ethics of social responsibility and concern for others; and the fact that this principle is integrated by economic, social, and environmental sustainabilities giving it corporate meaning and collaborating in the success of the cooperative associated as a result of its ethical identification. (International cooperatives Alliance, 91)

What is the interest for the community?

The cooperative is originally a resource to obtain satisfaction of a common need in a shared way. It is an alternative to the possibilities or the lack of possibilities and an

application rather than obtaining “strength” through “union.” (International cooperatives Alliance, 91)

The meaning of the corporate activity of the cooperative is linked fundamentally to society and environment that have a complex, diverse, and evolutionary structure.

In pursuit of common well-being the cooperative needs to relate to the representatives of different interests in the society like governments, local authorities, members of social organizations that are affected by its decisions and actions, different branches of the State, stakeholder companies, workers, and business associations in order to respond appropriately with its values and principles to the interests of the other as if they were representatives of the cooperative itself.

The relationship in an evolutionary society requires permanently that the cooperative and the members of society know and evaluate the interests and characteristics of others reciprocally, and that its activity makes sense in that environment in order to respond efficiently and effectively to their expectations of well-being.

Do these cooperatives comply with this principle?

They show their interest in the different spheres of society by collaborating with:

- The executive branch of the State through the Ministries of Housing and Urban Planning, in the discussion and subsequent support of public policies, and the active participation in their application, as pioneers in investment and application;

The Ministry of Economy as controlling entity;

The Ministry and Board of Environment, making environmental Declarations to incorporate impact mitigation activities in all of the housing developments they build;

The Ministry of Transportation to evaluate studies of urban impact and transportation of the same projects;

- The legislative branch through housing and urban planning committees in both chambers, providing opinions in discussions about sectoral legislation;
- Local, municipal and regional government authorities;
- In the cooperative sector and non-profit entities for housing, in COVIP, the association that groups them together;

The Cooperative Forum that groups big cooperatives from different sectors;

- In the private sector of the construction industry with participation in the Chilean Chamber of Construction;

The industrial sector of construction materials;

Concessionaire companies of public utilities;

Banks and financial entities for short-term and mortgage financing;

Insurance companies;

External professionals that provide temporary services on some projects;
The local community, with organizations of residential and commercial neighbors in places where the different projects are built;
Workers and unions.

FINAL CONCLUSION

Cooperative values are permanent, and although their principles are permanent they are not immutable and should be adapted to the characteristics that have been described, responding to the society at the time when they are applied.

These principles contribute to compliance with Agenda 2030. Special note should be taken of the specific contribution to families that emerge from the situation of poverty and join, together with their children, in the benefits of society.

There may have been errors or a disconnection with the changes in society in their application, which may be corrected to adapt them to the meaning of the cooperative movement.

The ethical and professional quality of the phenomenon analyzed in a distant country, its identification with the values and principles that have been described, and its solidary commitment make it possible to endorse the universal extension of the validity of the cooperative movement.

NOTES

ⁱ “Me parece que la idea del valor es la condición de posibilidad para la coexistencia de varias personas, para la mutualidad de los seres libres... El primer “valor” es que el otro existe como persona. En ese sentido, nada es más concreto: es la “cara” del otro, como dice Emmanuel Levinas, la que me dice: “No me mates”, y en términos más positivos: “Ámame: soy otro tú”. Ricoeur, P. ,2009, 144

ⁱⁱ “lo que muestra la experiencia de:” Ámame a partir del año 1989 es que sí cambiaron las circunstancias y que fue relevante haber sabido demostrar oportunamente que su naturaleza societaria se reflejaba en la cultura empresarial que impregnaba su gestión, respondiendo no solo a la eficiencia exigida, sino sobre todo a las necesidades de sus socios (beneficiarios) y a las expectativas del entorno público y privado”. Santelices R. Los frutos de la Permanencia. Pág. 19, Ril editores 2019

ⁱⁱⁱ “pero el mayor problema, en el siglo XX, es el acceso a los derechos sociales sobre el reparto equitativo en cuanto a la distribución de bienes comerciales y no comerciales a escala planetaria. En este aspecto, aquello que sufren especialmente los ciudadanos de todos los países es el contraste fragante entre la misma atribución de derechos y la desigual distribución de bienes.” Ricoeur P. Caminos del Reconocimiento. Pág. 207 Trotta 2005

^{iv} La dignidad de la persona y sus derechos son el sustento ético de la empresa que con todas las diferencias y heterogeneidades de la sociedad contemporánea la reconoce como el fundamento ético común, recogiendo en su objetivo central lo expresado por Kant que: “el hombre, y, en general, todo ser racional, existe como fin en sí mismo y no sólo como medio para cualesquiera usos de esta o aquella voluntad, y debe ser considerado siempre al mismo tiempo como fin en todas sus acciones, y no sólo las dirigidas a sí mismo sino las dirigidas también a los demás seres racionales” (Kant, 2015; 29), esto como premisa anterior a cualquier racionamiento estratégico y de decisión. Santelices R. 2019 B, 53

^v “Yo pensaría que los sistemas deben ser apreciados muy concretamente en función del doble objetivo hacia la humanidad total y la persona singular” Ricoeur, 2009, 167

^{vi} “En cuanto a la propiedad señala que Los clientes son los dueños de la cooperativa, y cada persona es propietaria de partes sociales. Nadie puede venderla sin su consentimiento. Esto no significa que los asociados tengan la capacidad de desmutualizarla. La cooperativa no le pertenece sólo al grupo actual de asociados, sino que se trata de una empresa con un legado intergeneracional para beneficio de los asociados actuales y los futuros. La condición de miembro no es transferible, por lo que no existe un mercado para las partes sociales. Los clientes también controlan la cooperativa. Como asociados, son parte integrante de la estructura de gobierno con potestades derivadas de su afiliación personal. Cada persona tiene un voto, con independencia del monto de capital que haya invertido”. Traducción personal. Birchall, 2014 Resilience in a downturn: The power of financial cooperatives; Oficina Internacional del Trabajo. – Ginebra ISBN 978-92-2-327031-5

^{vii} “auf das Identitätsprinzip ein, nach dem man eine Genossenschaft an der Identität von Trägern und Kunden (bzw. Lieferanten) erkennt. Dieses Identitätsprinzip, das man mit Benecke besser Identitätskriterium nennen sollte, weil dadurch seine Eigenschaft als äusseres Erkennungsmerkmal”. (Eschenburg, R. Pag 110) Traducción del autor “sobre el principio de identidad, por el cual una cooperativa reconoce la identidad de los socios como prestador del servicio y clientes (o proveedores). Este principio de identidad, que mejor debería llamarse un criterio de identidad con Benecke, debido a que de ese modo se reconoce por esa característica como la característica distintiva. Dass die Formulierung Identität von Trägern und Kunden nur Genossenschaften ohne jedes Nichtmitgliedergeschäft als solche bezeichnet, scheint mir nicht zwangsläufig zu sein. (Eschenburg, R. Pag 110) Traducción del autor “No me parece inevitable que el término identidad de socios y clientes solo se refiera a cooperativas, sin haber otra forma de empresa en ningún otro negocio que cumpla con los requisitos como tal”.

^{viii} Artículo 24: El consejo de administración, que será elegido por la junta general de socios, tiene a su cargo la administración superior de los negocios sociales y representa judicial y extrajudicialmente a la cooperativa para el cumplimiento del objeto social, sin perjuicio de la representación que compete al gerente, de acuerdo a lo dispuesto en el artículo 27 de esta ley. Decreto con Fuerza de Ley 5 Última Modificación :12-ENE-2019 Ley 21130.

^{ix} Artículo 28: La Junta General Ley 19.832 nombrará una Junta de Vigilancia que estará compuesta hasta por 5 miembros, pudiendo ser hasta 2 de ellos personas ajenas a la cooperativa, que cumplan los requisitos que establezca el reglamento. Dicha junta tendrá por objeto examinar la contabilidad, inventario, balance y otros estados financieros y las demás atribuciones que se establezcan en los estatutos y en el reglamento. Decreto con Fuerza de Ley 5 Última Modificación :12-ENE-2019 Ley 21130.

^x Tiene que existir un respeto mutuo entre las dos funciones distintas que son la responsabilidad de la gobernanza estratégica el consejo rector y las labores de gestión comercial cotidiana de los directivos. (International Cooperative Alliance pag 28)

^{xi} Las cooperativas multipartitas, es decir, las cooperativas con más de un grupo de miembros, como consumidores, empleados, empresarios independientes y personas jurídicas, que han surgido en las últimas décadas, se caracterizan por disposiciones específicas en sus estatutos que prevén una representación adecuada de las distintas partes interesadas, por ejemplo, diferentes sistemas de ponderación dentro de cada categoría de partes interesadas. (Wilson, pag.19)

^{xii} También exige la separación de los poderes democrático y ejecutivo, con controles y equilibrios adecuados bajo el control de los miembros. Estos deberán establecerse mediante distintos órganos dentro de la cooperativa, los cuales se encargarán de organizar las elecciones, determinar la estrategia de gobernanza y supervisar las auditorías y los informes de gobernanza para los miembros. (International Cooperative Alliance pag 17),

^{xiii} El control democrático por parte de los miembros no se limita simplemente a los procedimientos formales en las asambleas generales, sino que también incluye la separación de poderes, como en un Estado moderno, con controles y equilibrios ejercidos internamente. Estos controles y equilibrios son importantes en una cooperativa individual, pero también son fundamentales en las cooperativas de segundo y tercer grado y en los grupos cooperativos, que tienen estructuras más complejas, así como en los ecosistemas nacionales e internacionales

de comercio y transformación en los que las cooperativas están integradas en cadenas de valor globales compuestas por diferentes tipos de empresas y entidades, incluidas agencias estatales." (Wilson pag.20)

^{xiv} "Los avances en las modernas tecnologías de la información y la comunicación proporcionan nuevas herramientas para involucrar a los miembros en los procesos democráticos de la cooperativa. Las "tecnologías libres" han facilitado la creación y circulación del conocimiento con procesos colaborativos de innovación orientados a desarrollar soluciones cooperativas. Al mismo tiempo, hay que prestar la debida atención a la alfabetización digital y a la educación en aras de reducir la flagrante brecha existente entre los países". (Wilson 20)

^{xv} "Todos los miembros elegidos del consejo de administración son responsables de sus acciones ante los miembros de la cooperativa, en el momento de la elección y a lo largo de su mandato. De acuerdo con el segundo principio, los cooperativistas deben hacer responsable al consejo de administración de las decisiones empresariales clave y velar por que se produzca una renovación democrática continua, con la presentación de nuevos candidatos a los cargos electos" (Wilson pag.20)

^{xvi} Según el segundo principio, los miembros elegidos para ocupar puestos de responsabilidad en una cooperativa deben reflejar la diversidad de los miembros de la misma. Deberá fomentarse una acción positiva para animar a las personas de los grupos infrarrepresentados de los miembros a presentarse a las elecciones de las estructuras de gobierno. (Wilson pag 21)

^{xvii} ^{xviii} El artículo 21 de los Estatutos de Cooperativas Europa estipula: "La composición del consejo de administración debe reflejar la diversidad de edad y de género, garantizando una proporción mínima del 40% en cuanto a la diversidad de género". En 2020, la Asamblea General de Cooperativas Europa adoptó una "Carta de Compromisos" que incluye una sección sobre la igualdad de género que dice "Solo a través de la inclusión, la participación, la cohesión y la potenciación de las diferencias podremos avanzar en el camino del cambio, que sabemos que es un elemento crucial para responder a los retos sociales y económicos a los que se enfrenta el mundo". (Wilson Pag.21 notas)

^{xviii} los miembros de una cooperativa son los que la controlan en última instancia. También subraya que lo hacen activamente de manera democrática, mediante el derecho de voto de decisiones estratégicas clave sobre políticas y el derecho a participar en la elección de los representantes que controlan las actividades cotidianas de su cooperativa. (International Cooperative Alliance pag 18)

^{xix} ^{xix} Los acuerdos que se adopten deberán garantizar un control democrático efectivo y real por parte de los miembros, en lugar de tener una democracia teórica controlada por una instancia gerente o una élite que se autoperpetúa. (International Cooperative Alliance pag 19)

"Algunos códigos de gobernanza establecen límites de mandato de tres años después de los cuales el representante debe presentarse a una reelección, con un límite máximo de nueve años. Otros, incluida la Alianza, cuentan con límites de mandato máximo superiores: el tiempo máximo que una persona elegida puede permanecer en el consejo rector de la Alianza es de 18 años." (International Cooperative Alliance pag 29)

^{xx} La conocida como regla de oro del cooperativismo, el quinto principio de educación, obliga a atender la educación de carácter general y la formación de carácter profesional a socios y sus empleados para que avancen en su propio crecimiento intelectual y en el ejercicio de su trabajo. Al mismo tiempo propone la información de la naturaleza y beneficios de la cooperación a la sociedad, especialmente a los jóvenes y líderes de opinión. Y en este principio se empieza a observar una dimensión del cooperativismo de mayor alcance, que mira a la sociedad para trasladarle los beneficios de la cooperación, lo que también sucederá con los últimos principios cooperativos.

^{xxi} Se trata de una actividad esencial, ya que resulta fundamental para el éxito y la sostenibilidad de cualquier empresa cooperativa. (International cooperatives Alliance. 64)

^{xxii} La "formación" consiste en desarrollar las aptitudes prácticas que necesitan los miembros y empleados para dirigir una cooperativa de acuerdo con prácticas empresariales éticas y eficaces y para controlar democráticamente la empresa cooperativa (International cooperatives Alliance. 65)

^{xxiii} La educación consiste en comprender la identidad cooperativa y sus normas y saber aplicarlas en las operaciones cotidianas de una empresa cooperativa. También abarca una educación cooperativa más amplia a través del sistema educativo ordinario. La formación consiste en desarrollar las habilidades prácticas que los miembros y empleados necesitan tanto para dirigir su cooperativa de acuerdo con prácticas empresariales eficientes y éticas como para controlar su cooperativa democráticamente de forma responsable y transparente.

▪ El objetivo de la información es que el público en general, "especialmente a los jóvenes y los líderes de opinión", conozcan las cooperativas y los beneficios que aportan a la sociedad en general. Recoge la información que necesitan los miembros de la cooperativa para ejercer el control democrático de su empresa, así como la información y los conocimientos que se intercambian entre las cooperativas. (International cooperatives Alliance. 65)

^{xxiv} En efecto, en primer lugar, la cooperativa presenta una dimensión que atiende a la persona y su beneficio toda vez que se trata de una reunión de personas que comparten unos intereses y que pretenden realizarlos, pero inmediatamente esa realización se llevará a cabo entre todos y no de cualquier forma, sino a través de una empresa que pretende exhibir unos Principios valores determinados y para ello va a actuar siguiendo unos principios. (Martínez Charterina, A pág. 37)

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ACRONYM

ICA International Cooperative Alliance
SDG Sustainable Development Goals
GDP Gross Domestic Product