

THEMATIC ARTICLE

A typological study based on the attributes of solidarity economy workers for the improvement of public policies for job and income generation

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Abstract

This article presents a typological study based on the personal attributes and economic activities of associates of solidarity economy enterprises. The main focus is on the different social actors that integrate the different types of solidarity initiatives, intending to demonstrate their multiple demands and challenges. We used Multiple Factor Analysis (MFA) with variables extracted from the sample survey of the partners of the solidary economy, carried out by Senaes, in 2013, in the five regions of Brazil. MFA allowed summarizing and hierarchizing the results of the statistical data modeling, defining the existence of common factors and dissimilarity among the 2,895 respondents. The formed clusters resulted in three types, named family farmers (type 1), traditional peoples and communities (type 2), and associated urban workers (type 3). The characterization of the types and their demands may constitute a tool to provide subsidies to formulators and executors of public policies for job and income generation since it allows the targeting of actions that reflect the needs and specificities of each grouping.

Keywords: Development policies. Intersectionality. Associated work.

Um estudo tipológico baseado nos atributos dos trabalhadores(as) da economia solidária para o aperfeiçoamento das políticas públicas de geração de trabalho e renda

Resumo

Estudo tipológico baseado nos atributos pessoais e nas atividades econômicas dos associados dos empreendimentos de economia solidária. O foco principal são os diferentes atores sociais que integram as diversas modalidades de iniciativas solidárias. O objetivo é demonstrar suas múltiplas demandas e desafios. Empregamos a análise fatorial múltipla (AFM), juntamente com variáveis extraídas da pesquisa amostral dos sócios e das sócias da economia solidária, realizada pela Secretaria Nacional de Economia Popular e Solidária (Senaes) nas regiões do Brasil, em 2013. A AFM permitiu sumarizar e, ao mesmo tempo, hierarquizar os resultados da modelagem estatística dos dados, definindo, assim, a existência de fatores comuns e de dissimilaridade entre os 2.895 respondentes. Os *clusters* formados resultaram em três tipos, nomeados “agricultor familiar” (tipo 1), “povos e comunidades tradicionais” (tipo 2), e “trabalhadoras associadas urbanas” (tipo 3). A caracterização dos tipos e das suas demandas poderá se constituir ferramenta para dar subsídios aos formuladores e executores de políticas públicas de geração de trabalho e renda, uma vez que permite o direcionamento de ações que reflitam necessidades e especificidades de cada agrupamento.

Palavras-chave: Políticas de desenvolvimento. Interseccionalidade. Trabalho associado.

Un estudio tipológico basado en los atributos de los trabajadores de la economía solidaria para la mejora de las políticas públicas de generación de trabajo e ingresos

Resumen

Estudio tipológico basado en los atributos personales y las actividades económicas de los asociados de los emprendimientos de la economía solidaria. La atención se centra principalmente en los diferentes actores sociales que componen las diversas modalidades de iniciativas solidarias. El objetivo es demostrar sus múltiples demandas y desafíos. Empleamos el análisis factorial múltiple (AFM) junto con variables extraídas de la encuesta por muestreo a socios de la economía solidaria, realizada por la Secretaría Nacional de Economía Popular y Solidaria (Senaes) en las regiones de Brasil, en 2013. El AFM permitió resumir y, al mismo tiempo, clasificar los resultados de la modelización estadística de los datos, definiendo la existencia de factores comunes y de disimilitud entre los 2.895 encuestados. Las agrupaciones formadas dieron lugar a tres tipos, denominados “agricultor familiar” (tipo 1), “pueblos y comunidades tradicionales” (tipo 2), y “trabajadoras asociadas urbanas” (tipo 3). La caracterización de los tipos y sus demandas podría constituirse en una herramienta para brindar apoyo a los formuladores y ejecutores de políticas públicas de generación de trabajo y renta, ya que permite direccionar acciones que reflejen las necesidades y especificidades de cada agrupación.

Palabras clave: Políticas de desarrollo. Interseccionalidad. Trabajo asociado.

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INTRODUCTION

Although solidarity economy enterprises face adverse conditions related to the reduced production scale, lack of capital, and technological gap, it is undeniable that they generate employment and income in the current Brazilian reality to numerous segments that have been historically only partially included in formal employment relationships. The sampled research on male and female partners of solidarity economy, integrating the Solidarity Economy Information National System (Sistema Nacional de Informação em Economia Solidária – SIES), carried out by the Solidarity Economy National Secretariat (Secretaria Nacional Economia Solidária – Senaes) in 2013, presented a set of variables that revealed the life and work conditions of those that keep this field of activity. An interview was conducted with 2,895 partners from all regions of the country, aiming to build up the profile of the solidarity economy participants, and based on that support the creation and implementation of public policies.

The dismantling of social policies in the Brazilian scenery from 2016 onwards, starting with the impeachment of the president Dilma Rousseff, and the Senaes extinction during the government of Jair Bolsonaro, in 2019, limited the applicability of the data collected in the improvement of ongoing policies. The richness of the research integrating the SIES, after at least one decade as of its development is still recognized. However, according to Gaiger & Kuyven (2019), it is still not fully explored. Those authors pointed out the need for studies based on representative information when their objects imply the recurrence of singular facts, either behavioral or considering the features of certain populations. Moreover, they discuss the possibility of diachronic and retrospective analyses that allow the description of trends in solidarity enterprises over time. With the recovery of Senaes in 2023, in the third government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, this study is justified for presenting a typology elaborated based on the attributes of the solidarity economy workers, emphasizing their potentialities and demands with the purpose of informing public actions aiming at strengthening associated and self-managed work.

Understanding the different actors that take part in the diversity of solidarity enterprises results in the qualification of demands and challenges that are inherent in this segment and must be faced. While expanding, solidarity economy included several social categories and diverse organization modalities such as informal income generation groups, rural community associations, and groups in the periphery of urban centers, as well as cooperatives providing production and commercialization, services, and credit. The main focus of those groups, according to Veronese et al. (2017), is the social welfare and worthy reproduction for their associates. Due to the importance of the Solidarity Economy Enterprises - SEE in the improvement of conditions for these groups' worthy life, those authors advocate the approval of a legal mark contemplating the multiple formats they have and responding to the demands of the several social actors that take part in them.

The different SEE configurations aggregate a diversity of social actors such as *quilombolas*, artisanal fishermen, handicraftsmen, land reform settlers, family farmers, traditional peoples, recyclable material collectors, among others. Therefore, studies are needed to demonstrate the difference between such actors that form the SEE, since according to Veronese et al. (2017, p. 90, our translation), "[...] such great plurality requires thorough analytical detailing by field research on solidarity economy". Despite the existence of a significant production of studies in Brazil and Latin America, there is still a gap related to the multiple styles and life conditions revealed by the plurality of practices and rationalities that are guided by issues such as gender, ethnicity, territories, and singular lifestyles (Veronese et al., 2017).

Simultaneous to the arguments exposed, this article seeks to make those workers visible upon a typological classification highlighting their similarities and differences, aiming to contribute to the strengthening of solidarity initiatives. We recognize that the institutionalization of the solidarity economy enabled the most vulnerable segments to present their claims in the governments headed by the Workers Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores – PT). However, the policies developed aimed at combating extreme poverty, with rare exceptions, such as the mandatory acquisition of family farming products in the National School Feeding Program (Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar – PNAE), in 2009. For this reason, the need for the improvement of a public policy of social inclusion via promotion of associated work, collectively organized production and commercialization, and solidarity finances is evidenced. Considering this context, the construction of a typology based on the actors integrating the solidarity economy enterprises might constitute a tool to support development public policy makers and executors, since it allows the guidance of actions focusing the needs and specificities of each group.

This article is structured in six sections. This introduction followed by the second section that proposes a reflection on the potential of employment and income generation by solidarity economy initiatives, even if they face serious restriction in the implementation of social rights. The third section presents the study methodology, describing the procedures adopted to handle the data base resulting from the sample survey on male and female partners of the solidarity economy. The fourth and fifth sections are dedicated to the characterization of the types elaborated, focusing on similarities and differences, to reveal the demands of each group. Finally, the last section points out the main challenges that if solved might strengthen this field of struggle and resistance.

SOLIDARITY ECONOMY AS A MECHANISM OF EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME GENERATION

The solidarity economy constitutes a development instrument by promoting work associated with productive inclusion and democratization of credit via programs that support solidarity finances. The possibility of generating decent work¹ via solidarity enterprises is object of controversies due to the effective conditions of guaranteed social rights. Santos (2019, p. 37), however, states “[...] that solidarity economy advances and the efforts of those involved in these dynamics cannot be silenced, wasted, or produced as inexistent”. That author emphasizes that the impossibility of protecting the associated work during the institutionalization phase of the solidarity economy policy at the federal level exemplifies the lack of understanding of the social demands in a state where greater popular participation was allowed, but it occupied a peripheral position in the budget distribution. This fact prevented the establishment of a proper legal mark for the solidarity economy in the country.

After the Law No. 12,690/2012 was enacted regulating the organization and functioning of work cooperatives, the associated work, that is, the one characterized by mutual assistance, self-management, and profit sharing between the workers, was expected to eliminate precarious employment relationships, since it represented a resistance and survival alternative for several vulnerable groups (Anjos & Matos, 2022). The said law guarantees certain rights which are close to those ensured by the formal employment such as income according to the minimum wage of the respective professional category and, in the absence of such category, not below the minimum regional wage; 8-hour/day workload and 44-hour/week workload; remunerated weekly rest; remunerated yearly rest, etc. (Pereira & Silva, 2012). However, in practice, the law approved is somehow distance from the work reality of workers that take part in solidarity economy enterprises, either in the cooperative, association, or informal group formats. This is due to the fact that they must face the globalized market challenges, which require the fulfilment of an intense workload in a context of capital system harsh competition, which demands the insertion of their products in the market.

Promoting the participation of solidarity economy enterprises aims to insert workers, mainly those with low qualification, in differentiated forms of obtaining income. In addition, it seeks to combat underemployment, which affects part of the economically active population (EAP) and reduce poverty. The solidarity economy movement includes diverse actors with specific characteristics and objectives according to their activity. Krachete (2021) emphasized that the predominance of family farming enterprises in the solidarity economy evidences that work inclusion policies via SEE struggle to absorb around 16 million workers operating in the popular economy via individual entrepreneurship. Those workers should take part in the discussions about productive inclusion in public management since they are in a situation of vulnerability.

Nevertheless, the significant percentage of solidarity enterprises whose main motivation is to be established as a source of remunerated work for their associates is undeniable. Taking that into consideration, we must emphasize the reports from previous studies on the situation of women, mainly black women, in solidarity work initiatives. The economic activity developed in those enterprises represents those women main income. Among them, the percentage of black women is higher when compared to the presence of white women. This data reveals the continuity of socioeconomic vulnerability in several segments involved in the SEE due to the incipience of rights and benefits secured by the cooperatives that integrate the *Segundo Mapeamento Nacional da Economia Solidária* (Second National Mapping of Solidarity Economy) (Anjos, 2020).

¹ The International Labor Organization (ILO) defines decent work as the one that pays properly, is executed in freedom, equity and safety conditions, and is able to secure dignity to all people developing it. Ministério do Trabalho e Emprego (2006).

The Generation of employment and income is an action directed to the poorest segments, which are more susceptible to unemployment in the periphery of cities and rural communities. Those groups used to articulate in associations, informal groups, and cooperatives, but never achieved the necessary structure to secure economic sustainability. Gaiger and Laville (2009) pointed out that the economic experiences in this field involve a diversity of practices whose rationale is different from that operating in capitalist principles. The investigations carried out support the view that solidarity work experiences are alternatives for those that were only partially integrated in the formal employment system, and seek, in adverse conditions, the construction of a work with an emancipatory connotation, but that at the same time can guarantee the rights that are desired by the whole working class (Anjos et al., 2019).

Such solidarity practices have their own ways of commercialization, management, and social integration. Their purpose is to strengthen the dissemination of associative practice and cooperativism, contributing to change the reality of the production and work conditions of those involved. This can only occur with the appreciation of the worker's autonomy – which increases their self-esteem –, mainly of those deprived of the rights and opportunities offered by formal employment. In this perspective, the SEE allowed a range of possibilities of action and forms of inclusion according to the objectives set by the associates.

However, some authors evaluated thoroughly the dissemination of the entrepreneurship narrative, since this might hide some disadvantages for those working in the plurality of alternative forms of work (Kraychete, 2021; Leite & Lindôso, 2021).

Leite and Lindôso (2021) observed that the rights secured by formal employment are considered inequality generators. This leads to the social appreciation of unprotected work practices, which are considered alternative, since they are supported by the entrepreneur's discourse that faces the challenges of the job market. Those authors identify, in that narrative, the content of neoliberal policies disguised by the notion of "entrepreneur of the self", which would provide them with the position of winner in society, regardless of the employment relationship they are able to establish.

Those authors' remarks are relevant for regarding a country that historically has presented high levels of informality, as shown by the National Household Sampling Survey (Pesquisa Nacional de Amostra do Domicílio – PNAD) of 2019, reporting 41% of the EAP in this condition. This context reinforces the need for public policies that guarantee funding and effective alternatives for the SEE commercialization, otherwise, they might enter a birth/death cycle, typical of micro and small businesses.

With a different view, Kraychete (2021) exposed the large number of workers excluded from the social protection originated in the formal employment and that reproduce in a sector that the author calls "economy of the popular sectors". Such exclusion is not, according to the author, a conjunctural problem; it is rather a historical process that started in the colonial relations of slave work and resulted from a set of economic activities usually devaluated and impoverished. To guarantee the rights of those segments, he emphasized the need for labor social policies that consider them, since they are not given visibility, even in public actions that aim at strengthening associated work. Therefore, the alternative would be collective projects guaranteeing the constitution of social bonds, protection and security rights.

The reflection put forward by Kraychete (2021) values even more the solidarity economy initiatives. The SEE main purpose is the assistance to the material needs of their associates, as well as their non-monetary aspirations such as autonomy, recognition, along with social and political inclusion. These enterprises represent a production alternative in rural and urban spaces and, likewise, a more democratic experience provided by the participation of their members when opting for a collective modality whose goal is not only ensure its reproduction, but also their families. When acting in this way, they introduce ethical issues in the economic dimension, which start to operate in that universe, following principles that cannot be reduced to the utilitarian logic.

At the concrete level, a reification of the concept does not occur in this study, since the SEE heterogeneity in the perspective of this research imposes an intersectional analysis considering the historical process of development implemented in Brazil. This process was marked by strategies originated in political and economic actions that resulted in a country that is regionally unequal and segmented into fractions of working classes according to their gender, racial and generation profile.

METHODOLOGY

The peculiarities observed among workers acting in different initiatives of solidarity economy indicate relevant differences regarding the potentialities and limits they face, which results in groups with their own interests of production, commercialization, service supply, management, and access to policies. In this context, a typology based on the attributes of those integrating the solidarity experiences might be a reference for the creation and/or improvement of policies aiming at economic inclusion, mainly of the segments in greater vulnerability conditions.

The typological study emphasizes constitutive features of certain population, in order to create subgroups with statistical metrics of similarities and/or differences (quantitative factorial methods), characterizing each type elaborated by the variables that explain their diversity (Mingoti, 2005). The Senaes (Secretaria Nacional de Economia Popular e Solidária [Senaes], 2013) carried out a sample survey with 2,895 partners in solidarity economy in the states of Rio Grande do Sul, Paraná, Santa Catarina, São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Pará, Tocantins, Alagoas, Bahia, Ceará, Piauí, Rio Grande do Norte, Goiânia, and the Federal District. This is a regionally stratified representative sample (Bolfarine & Bussab, 2004), which captured the multiplicity of actors belonging to the SEE and their trajectories, and also enabled the measurement of the role of the solidarity economy in the country development process.

The composition of the social framework of these SEE is defined in terms of class, race, gender and generation. Thus, studying this composition and the social conditioners to understand the structures of dependence between individuals and their organizations results in analyses that might qualify policies of employment and income generation. To achieve such aim, we selected a set of variables via individual inference mediated by evaluation of secondary data obtained from the Questionnaire of female and male partners of solidarity economic enterprises (Questionário de Sócias e de Sócios dos Empreendimentos Econômicos Solidários – QSES) of the sample survey.

Since the tool adopted was not initially developed with this purpose, some methodological restrictions were considered as pointed out by Foddy (2003), as follows: taking care to interpret correctly the objective of certain data collection and observing how it suits the purpose of the study. The modelling of non-delineated data, outside the experimental context, requires approaches that take into consideration the complexity (Hostiou et al., 2006) of study objects with multiple dimensions such as the case of solidarity economy enterprises and their social framework. This category includes data regarding racial, gender, and generation profiles underlying their socioeconomic determinants. Considering that these configurations influence the decision-making processes and representativeness, the modeling sought to identify and correlate explaining factors in this sense. We adopted an exploratory and multidimensional approach (Lebart et al., 2002), with the extraction of eigenvalues corresponding to each factor in each observation, which enabled us to obtain functional types by means of ascending hierarchical classification (Pagès, 2014).

The data base used, along with the variables and their inter-relations described what is called “multivariate problems” (Abdi & Valentin, 2007). Therefore, the analytical strategy enabled: i) the identification of linear relations between the original variables, individuals, and constructs; ii) the reduction of the original data set size; and iii) the identification of synthetic dimensions that aggregate to inertia, that is, explaining capability in interpretive axes (Escofier & Pagès, 2008).

In more specific terms:

- I. The linear relations between original variables, individuals, and constructs regard the set of relations and dependence among the partners, their own social origin, and people they interact with, their work relations, and the materialization of such phenomena in their lives and relationship with the SEE. The questions of the QSES were used with this purpose.
- II. Reducing the size of original data sets was necessary, since phenomena described by too many variables simultaneously tend to generate a huge volume of information and interactions between different information. Thus, the discursive analysis or even its formalization in a conventionally structured model become unrealistic options when seeking to extract useful information, but that in the context aggregates higher relevance to the data set (QSES variables) and object (partners).

Therefore, the multiple factorial analysis (MFA) enabled the summary and at the same time the establishment of a hierarchy of results of the QSES data statistical modelling. In this study, aiming at meeting the criteria mentioned above, the variables were subjected to MFA used with the purpose of defining the existence of common factors and differences among the variables presented in Box 1.

Box 1
Variables selected to elaborate the typology

MFA groups	Variables*	Description of categories	Variable classification
Socioeconomic indicators	Age	How old are you?	Continuous quantitative
	Number of children	Number of children	Counting quantitative
	Number of residents, except you	Number of residents in the household	Counting quantitative
	Number of dependents	Dependents of the breadwinner(s)	Counting quantitative
Social Characterization	Religion	What's your religion?	Classification qualitative
	Race and color	Yellow, white, indigenous, mixed-race, black**	Classification qualitative
	Traditional Peoples	Traditional peoples or communities	Classification qualitative
	Social Condition	Farmer, settler, artisan, collector, artist, self-employed, etc.	Classification qualitative
Formal education	Reading and writing	Can you read and write? Do you have difficulties reading/writing?	Classification qualitative
	School attendance	Does not attend, is attending, or already attended school	Classification qualitative
	Schooling level	Schooling coefficient, metric indicator	Scale quantitative
Housing, sex, and marital status	Sex	Male, female, others	Classification qualitative
	Marital status	Married, single, widow(er), stable union, others	Classification qualitative
	Housing	Rural, urban, others	Classification qualitative
Occupation, work, and income	Breadwinner	Who is the person responsible for managing the family financial support?	Classification qualitative
	Occupation	Brazilian Classification of Occupations (Classificação Brasileira de Ocupações – CBO)	Classification qualitative
	SEE economic activities	Classification of Economic Activities (Classificação de Atividades Econômicas – CNAE)	Classification qualitative
	Unemployed	Were you unemployed for any period? When/how long?	Classification qualitative
	Economic activities outside the SEE	SEE economic activity; (Classificação de Atividades Econômicas – CNAE)	Classification qualitative
Planning and organization	SEE future plans	What are your future plans in the SEE?	Classification qualitative
	Participation in forums and networks	Do you take part in forums and networks?	Classification qualitative
	Unions	Are you a member of a union?	Classification qualitative
	Class organization	Do you take part in councils/class organizations?	Classification qualitative

* The choice of variables was based on the relative contribution of the variables according to their eigen-values.

** We opted for reclassifying the possibilities of answers according to the classification used by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE).

Source: Questionnaire of the sample survey on male and female partners of the solidarity economy (Senaes, 2013).

Two main dimensions were derived from the MFA, which gather around 56% of the variance applied. The theme groups of variables linked to “housing, sex, and marital status”; “occupation, work, and income” contributed to most of the variance explained for dimension 1. In dimension 2, there were variable groups linked to “formal education”, “social characterization”, and “socioeconomic indicators”.

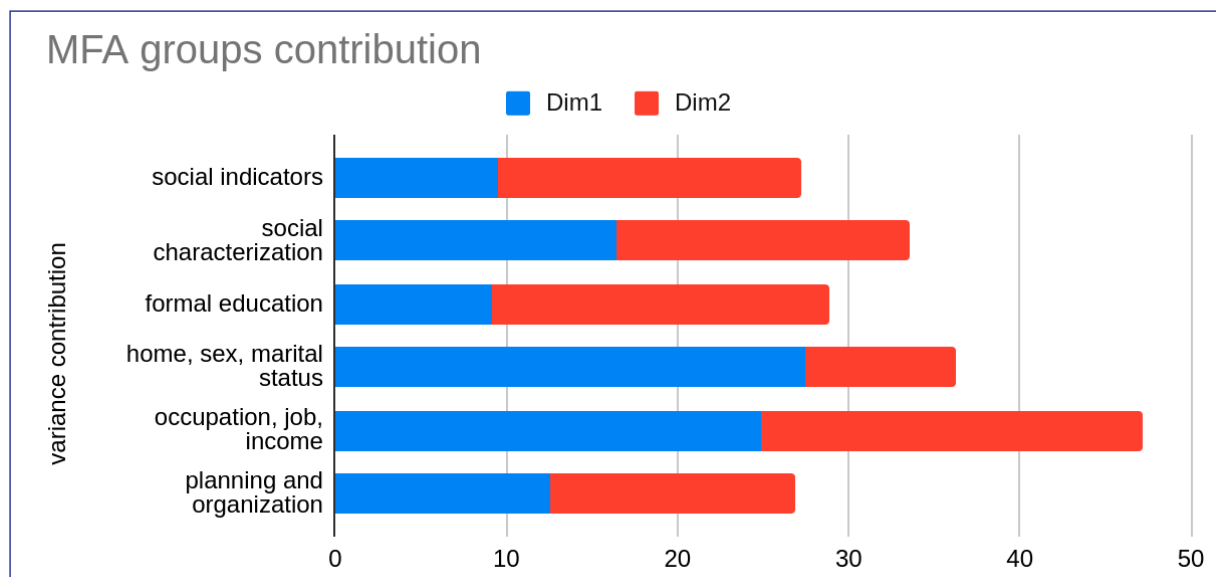
In the MFA conduction, the Rcmdr library was accessed to supply the R interface and the FactoMiner packet, aiming to implement the analysis interaction model. The interpretation of the types elaborated with the adopted method is summarized in the following section.

TYOPOLOGY FORMATION THROUGH THE MFA

The Ascending Hierarchical Classification (Escofier & Pages, 2008) was employed based on the original variables, joined in theme groups (Box 1). Such approach resulted in the formation of clusters of cases that, when interpreted in the light of the main dimensions (factors), originated the typology.

The synthetic variables, formed by applying the MFA to the data set, as previously described, were classified according to their explained variable, that is, the ability to discriminate the analyzed cases.

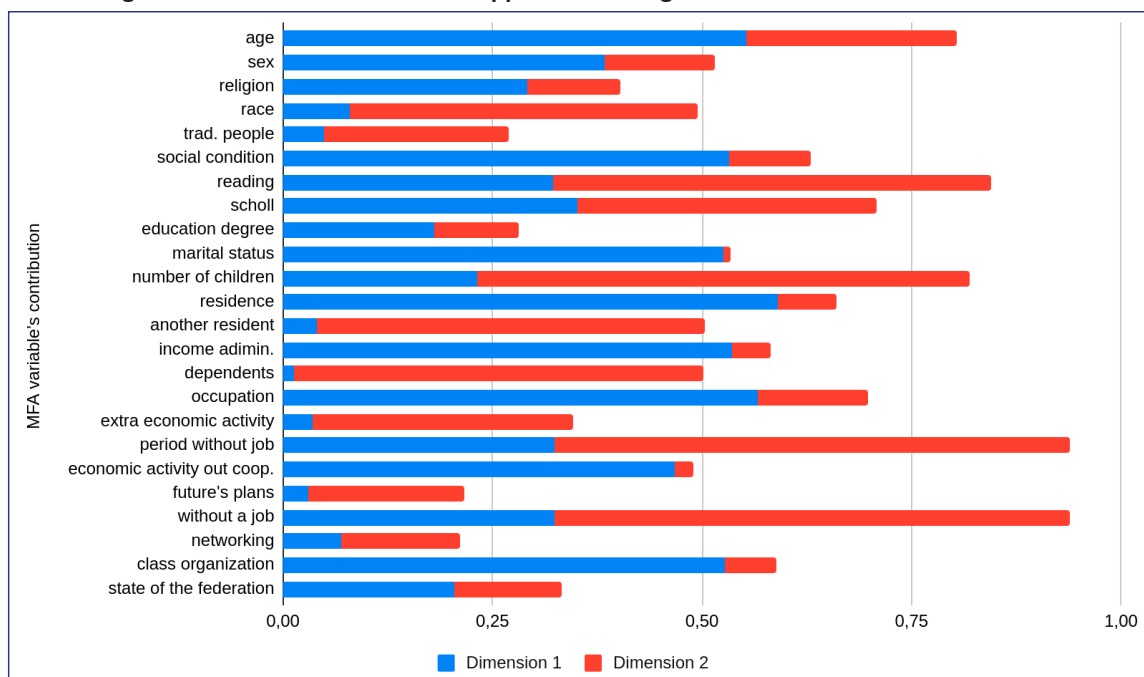
Figure 1
Contribution of the variables based on the dimensions created in the MFA in the two main dimensions considered – dimension 1 (in blue) and dimension 2 (in red)



Source: Sample survey on male and female partners of the solidarity economy (Senaes, 2013).

The contribution of the variables is mainly ascribed to one of the FMA dimensions (dimension 1 and 2). Recurring to the eigen values, which represent the integration of the individual variances of the original variances in each dimension, we classified the cases in different types. The plotting of individuals’ scores in the factorial plan, created following the procedure described, originated a “cloud of cases”. The classification of these cases, according to the squared Euclidian Distance, made the grouping of the cases in the original cloud easier. Such grouping followed the criterion of intragroup maximum homogeneity, that is, low variance and maximum intergroup heterogeneity. The mathematical procedures and a more detailed explanation of the iteration models are found in Escofier and Pages (2008). The summary of the original variables in the MFA theme groups is shown below (Figure 2).

Figure 2
Theme grouping of the MFA variables according to the discriminatory characteristics of the original variables and the variance applied according to the two main dimensions considered



Key: **ind.social** (social indicators); **carac.social** (socioeconomic characterization); **educ.formal** (level of formal education); **morad.sexo.est.civ** (housing, sex, and marital status); **ocup.trab.renda** (occupation, work, and income); **planejam.organiz** (planning and organization).

Source: Sample survey on male and female partners of the solidarity economy (Senaes, 2013).

Using the key provided below, Box 1, one can carry out the integrated reading of the typology formed considering the theme groups of the MFA variables. Those groups represent the classification of the original variables into interpretive groups belonging to the relevant area of studies (Abdi et al., 2013). Thus, employing these procedures, we obtained the types that classified solidarity workers according to the original variables of the sampled research, via the analytical criteria explained above.

CHARACTERIZATION OF SOLIDARITY WORKERS ACCORDING TO THE TYPES ELABORATED

After elaborating the MFA clusters with the variables selected, we identified those that presented greater weight to discriminate subgroups within the original set of workers selected from the sample survey. Such identification resulted in three types, which can be described with certain level of alterity in the solidarity economy field. The distribution of the 2,895 partners into the three groups elaborated resulted in 1,605 in type 1, 264 in type 2, and 1,026 in type 3.

Since the variables related to housing, sex, and marital status, followed by those that described occupation, work, and income had a greater contribution to the explanation of the observations (Figure 2), they will have a greater comparative weight among the types 1, 2, and 3. Successively, the variables in the subsequent groups created in the MFA explained less remarkable aspects in the typological discrimination of cases.

Type 1 – Those were mainly men (69.6%), most of them in the 41 to 60 years old age group (85.1%), this type presented the lowest proportion of young individuals among the groups (7.3%). Regarding race, the black population showed the highest number (58.8%), followed by white individuals (38.9%). The majority was married (over 80%) and Catholics (84.6%). Most of them lived in rural areas, with significant presence of the Northeast region (47.5%), followed by the South (20.8%). The most expressive category was that of family farmers (71.3%), followed by the category settlers (22.3); agriculture and livestock

were the most prominent occupations. The household administration was carried out by the couple (46%) and the research respondent (32.3%). This argument expresses the rural version of the solidarity economy, with preponderance of male work, which suggests the persistency of the invisibility of women's work in rural spaces. The percentage of those who can read and write was 56%, while a significant percentage, 43.2%, could not read or write, even though 87.6% had attended school at some point in their lives. Among those who attended school, the highest number, that is, 52%, finished elementary school, while 20.2% finished high school. This is the type with the highest percentage of social participation, and the one that expressed greatest intention of broadening their activities in the SEE (49.7%). Due to their characteristics – personal, social, and economic –, the type was named **family farmers**.

Type 2 – This type showed a more balanced presence of men (51.5%) and women (48.5%) and a quite similar distribution between rural and urban, regarding their place of residence. It was characteristic in the North and Northeast regions (83.3%), with fewer representatives in other regions. The predominant age group was from 20 to 50 years old (61%). The percentage of those self-declared Catholics was 62.9%. The prevalence of black and mixed-race individuals (71.3%) was observed in this type, and it showed the highest proportion of indigenous people (9.5%). This type also gathered the highest proportion of individuals who self-identify as traditional peoples or communities, such as fishermen, indigenous, and *quilombolas*, totaling 77.4%. Most of them were married, and the most expressive occupations included farmers, artisans, self-employed, and settlers. Regarding schooling, this type showed the highest number of people who cannot read or write (15.2%) or can only do it with great difficulty (38.6%), totaling 53.8% of people non-proficient in writing. It also outstood for the highest percentage of people who never attended school (10.6%), with predominance of elementary school 7.1%. This is the type that showed the highest percentage of individuals responsible for the household management (38.6%), followed by the couple (26.5%). Although its social representation is relatively lower (35.2%), 27.3% reported their future intention of broadening their activities in SEE. Given their characteristics – personal, social, and economic –, this type was called **traditional peoples and communities**.

Type 3 – Women predominated in this type (68.7%) with the highest proportion of residences in urban spaces (80.3%). Although 50% of the respondents were married, this is the type with the highest percentage of single (34.6%) and divorced individuals (8.4%). It is also the one joining the highest proportion of young individuals between 20 and 30 years old (18.8%), thus showing the lowest percentage of individuals in the 51-60-year-old age group (17.9%). Its racial profile was similar to that of type 1, with 59.1% black and mixed-race individuals and 37.9% white individuals. Regionally, its most remarkable presence is in the Northeast (31.4%), but it shows a quite uniform distribution in the remaining regions. As for occupations, it also showed the greatest diversity, highlighting the higher representation of artisans (27.7%), followed by recyclable material collectors (13.8%), family farmers (13.6%), self-employed workers (11.6%), and professional technicians (7.2%). Regarding education, this is the type presenting the highest formal literacy rate (81.3%). It is also in this group that the most expressive percentages of concluded high school (49.1%), graduation (24.8%), and *lato sensu* post-graduation (6.2%) were recorded, contrasting notably with the other types in this aspect. The item “household management” also presented higher diversity with 25% of the respondents being in charge of this task, followed by the couple (20%), and by the spouse (20%). Another aspect that was different from the other types was their social participation, since only 15% gave an affirmative answer; however, 46% stated their intention of increasing their participation in SEE activities. Due to their characteristics – personal, social, and economic –, this type was named **urban associated female workers**.

DIVERSITY OF EXPERIENCES AND DEMANDS IN SOLIDARITY ECONOMY

The family farmers' group (Type 1) represents men's dominance of the production and commercialization and, still, little visibility of the rural women's work, in addition to the incipient presence of young individuals. The rural face of solidarity economy is more publicized, since field solidarity enterprises were the ones to continue receiving some public support, even when the existing social policies were extinguished in the last four years. The National School Feeding Program (PNAE) and the Food Acquisition Program (Programa Aquisição de Alimentos – PAA), renamed as *Programa Alimenta Brasil* (Brazil Feeding Program), in 2021, were kept. The family farming representative organizations put some pressure on the government for its execution due to the role played by these programs in their access to markets.

The Family farming Secretariat (Secretaria de Agricultura Familiar – SAF) of the Agriculture, Livestock and Supply Ministry (MAPA – Ministério da Agricultura, Pecuária e Abastecimento) followed with the policies directed to rural cooperativism to face the problem of operationalization of the governmental purchase and to diversify commercialization channels. The requirements to take part in the government purchase programs favored the expansion of the association format in family farming, thus promoting greater collective organization, as shown by the Senaes sample survey (2013). That study revealed that in the year before the research, 40.7% of the partners commercialized in the SEE. Reinforcing the market demands, commercialization (51.8%) and consumption (21.1%) are the main economic activities of that subgroup.

The access to markets remains a huge bottleneck for family farming, mainly in the North and Northeast regions. For this reason, the stimuli of public policies and collective organization is fundamental to broaden the scale, reducing transaction costs, and increasing producers' profits (Anjos et al., 2022). Nevertheless, we could observe that broadening the participation of this segment in enterprises is another great challenge since the 2017 Agriculture and Livestock Census, by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2019), revealed that, out of the 3,897,408 family farms in Brazil, only 40.1% are linked to some associative organization. Although type 1 is the one with the greatest social participation, solidarity economy has a vast field to strengthen commercialization in rural spaces that concentrate a large contingent of the most vulnerable with serious difficulties to create perspectives of a promising future to guarantee the permanence of young individuals in rural areas.

The importance of the income originated in SEE for type 1 is an indicator of the relevance of the policies in this field, with potential to be broadened since 34.6% of the respondents reported it as the main source of their income, the highest percentage among the types identified. Also 31.2% reported that this income is a complement to other income sources they have. With the reappearance of a specific ministry of family farming in the current Lula's government, expanding technical assistance, credit, and funding might be a promising strategy to increase food production, as defended by the representatives of solidarity cooperativism such as the United Solidarity Cooperatives (União das Cooperativas Solidárias – Unicopas). However, it is also crucial to develop policies valuing female work since the experiences of the solidarity economy work and income generation point to the female protagonism, which echoes their financial autonomy (Cintrão & Siliprandi, 2011), rural women still have not taken an outstanding position in the type that best characterizes the SEE rural universe.

Hora et al. (2021) pointed out that despite the important contribution of women's work in family farming, their work still has little visibility and recognition due to the inequality of gender relations. Such approach is reinforced by the *Censo Agropecuário 2017* (2017 Agriculture and Livestock Census) (IBGE, 2019), which reported low percentage of female rural producers in family farming. Those farms are mostly managed by men (80%), and even among those that are linked to some form of association, women are the minority, representing only 19.7% of the total recorded in Brazil. Such scenery shows the challenge of evidencing and recognizing the work of female family farmers, who keep playing an essential role, mainly in reproductive work and solidarity initiatives. As an example of this scenery, in type 1, they were represented by 30% only.

Type 2 portrays a historical scenery of inequalities that imposes transversal actions to remedy the problems faced by that group. The implementation of the *Programa Brasil Quilombola*, for example, despite having promoted advancements in the recognition of the demands of the certified *quilombola* communities, has not been able to guarantee the same proportion of ownership of the lands they occupy (Arruti, 2009). Those workers' profile shows that the policies proposed by Senaes to broaden their spaces of commercialization and credit benefits might not have permanent success, since the lack of dialogue with other instances makes it impossible to face structural problems such as the low schooling level and lack of infrastructure in their communities. The joint action of the Ministry of Native Peoples, Racial Equality and Human Resources might strengthen their demands institutionally and the mobilization of forces for the creation of a legal mark considering the specificities and vulnerabilities of the segments inserted in the SEE.

The main economic activity in this type is commercialization (59.5%), with the highest percentage observed in the typology. However, beyond contributing to the short circuits of commercialization, type 2 (59.5%) – followed by type 3 (58.4%) and type 1 (55.1%) – showed the highest percentage of workers that did not have economic activities outside the SEE in 2012, the year before the sample survey. Such statistics showed that at that time, the SEE were the only economic activity of a high percentage of those workers. This data becomes more relevant with the observation that in the work life of the workers

included in the sample, 34.1% in type 2, 25.5% in type 3, and 15% in type 1 reported having experienced long periods of unemployment or absence of income. In addition, in 25% of the households in types 1 and 2, at least two other people in the residence were dependent on those workers' income.

Although collectivity is a characteristic of the groups representing type 2, the low percentage of social participation and future plans by the workers of this subgroup in the SEE showed the need to strengthen their associative organization with economic purposes. The links built via community relationships seem to have relative impact on the economic results of those people, since 23.9% relied mainly on the income obtained in the enterprise for their survival. For 28.4%, other income sources were complemented with their gains in the solidarity economy. Despite that, this is the type with the highest percentage of people motivated to remain in the SEE, that is, 80.7% against 65.4% and 71% in types 1 and 2, respectively.

The low schooling level identified by the MFA and the more significant presence of indigenous individuals evidenced, in this study perspective, the need for the qualification of the demands and contexts of the subgroups included in this type. Although *quilombolas*, indigenous and other native peoples still keep the ownership of their lands as one of their main claims (Arruti, 2009), indigenous in villages, *quilombolas* in urban spaces, and artisanal fishermen demand specific policies that require some dialogue with and between several government agencies. On the one hand, such multiplicity imposes challenges to the legal mark of the solidarity economy, but, on the other hand, it signals the transversality of the policy as a strategy to meet several requirements.

The typology results suggest public actions that could qualify type 1 and, mainly, type 2 with the valorization of the sociobiodiversity production. Such actions might be planned by the technical assistance team, who, besides giving specific guidance in farm management and the commercialization process, could also catalogue the culinary diversity of these two types for the creation of new menus, suitable for schools, for example. The development of new products and ways of processing, via sociobiodiversity, could promote the valorization of ancient practices, and at the same time boost ecogastronomy². In this way, the participation of family farming, native peoples and traditional communities in the public purchase programs would be broadened.

Having in this study a type in which women predominate in urban spaces revealed the challenges of securing work with social protection. This fact must be considered since unlike the policies destined to strengthen the farming activity, actions to boost associated work by Senaes, for example, have experienced a significant budget reduction since the president Dilma Rousseff's government (Silva, 2020). Women are the group that face the most disadvantages in the job market, mainly black women, as shown by the Statistics and Socioeconomic Interunion Department (Departamento Intersindical de Estatística e Estudos Socioeconômicos [Dieese], 2022) in the 2021 PNAD data. In the third quarter of 2021, the underuse of women was 33.3%, while male underuse had reached 20.9%. At the same time, the unemployment rate among black women was 18.9%, against 12.5% among non-black women. This data revealed the struggle of associated women in a type of work that is still far from securing their labor rights and altering the asymmetries that historically permeate the job market in the Brazilian reality, mainly regarding gender and race issues.

Previous research has shown that solidarity enterprises represent the main remunerated work that has the highest proportion of black women (Anjos, 2020). In this study, type 3 revealed the diversity of the forms of occupation in the solidarity economy, with singular presence in the urban space and with a high schooling degree when compared to the other types. The younger and better educated age group might explain why this type showed the lowest percentage of economic activity outside the sampled SEE in the year before the survey, totaling 28.4%. In the comparison, types 1 and 2 presented 38.1% and 32.2%, respectively. This data reinforces the SEE role as a work alternative for their members, since it was in this type that we found the most expressive percentage of those reporting remunerated work as their main economic activity (37%). Types 1 and 2 resulted in 6.4% and 5.3%, respectively. Moreover, out of the 492 workers included in the sample survey who informed remunerated work in the SEE as their main economic activity, 81.5% stated that they had a permanent job in the SEE, while 92.5% of them reported that their remuneration was secured by the SEE.

²This is a concept that incorporates biodiversity preservation and stimuli to healthy eating habits along with appreciation for the food and its producer.

Analyses related to type 3 confirmed the arguments put forward by Kraychete (2021) regarding the most adverse conditions of urban associative enterprises when compared to those of the family farming. According to that author, urban workers in general do not own the work means and equipment or a previous production that could support an enterprise. Therefore, there is certain urgency in achieving positive results, mainly when they have no other income source. The predominance of type 3 in urban spaces expresses the ways of work and income generation adopted by popular sectors. Although they represent a minority group in the solidarity economy context, this segment might present greater possibility of broadening their initiatives due to the expressive number of workers driven to entrepreneurship. Their ability to absorb a larger number of formally employed and paid workers is limited by technological advancement, resulting in individual entrepreneurship interrupted policies (Leite & Lindôso, 2021). This segment presents an opportunity of strengthening the solidarity economy policies, which might promote associative entrepreneurship between the segments that compose the popular economy.

Kraychete (2021) explained that in urban spaces, the participants of associative enterprises do not have a regular paid job; they are in general also linked to individual or family enterprises, which constitutes a typical characteristic of popular sectors. The *Portal do Microempreendedor* (Microentrepreneur Portal) recorded 15,161,694 workers enrolled as individual microentrepreneurs (microempreendedor individual – MEI) in May 2023. Despite the high number of individuals enrolled, it is not possible to estimate precisely the percentage of those that effectively pay the monthly contribution necessary for the access to the benefits of social protection. In addition, according to the Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service. (Sebrae - Serviço Brasileiro de Apoio às Micro e Pequenas Empresas), 29% of the micro businesses tend to close their companies before five years of existence.

Nevertheless, MEI has been used by the associative enterprise workers in the solidarity economy as a way to access social protection. However, this institution does not provide social security by the existing collective bond since the social security tax payment has to be made by each worker. The deprivation context faced by the segments inserted in solidarity economy, mainly in urban spaces, contributes to increased difficulties regarding social security, mainly for female solidarity workers in reproductive age that have in this field their main source of income (Anjos et al., 2019).

Securing social protection to the associated female urban workers not integrated to social security, and to other solidarity workers, depends on public policies aiming at supporting a system that integrates them to the social security rights by means of associative insertion. Such policies must strengthen solidarity enterprises, as collective spaces of commercialization, so that the reality of social protection to each member of the enterprises is guaranteed with sustainability in aspects related to the human resources that integrate them.

In addition to the contexts focuses on in each type analyzed, similar needs were also identified, however, with varied intensity, suggesting that the policies already implemented, present distinct impacts on different members. It seems relevant to emphasize those that show higher percentage due to a relevant demand for the workers. Government support policies are the most prominent claim in all types, reaching 97.6% in type 3. This group also mentioned the need for higher technical and managerial qualification, with 94.6%, followed by type 2, with 93.2%, and type 1, with 82%.

When considering the level of formal education of the members, we observed the challenge of qualifying the management teams of the enterprises so that they reach higher productive efficiency, increase their commercialization, and improve their gains – three other demands that outstood among the groups. Also, the results pointed out that greater participation in the SEE decisions in all subgroups was requested, mainly in types 2 and 3.

The most expressive percentages in type 2 – native peoples and traditional communities – were somehow divided into “owned office” and “SEE formal register”, with 86% and 62.9% respectively, while the others reported, 60% and 37%, on average. This data suggests greater vulnerability of the segments composing that type, indicating the need for recognition by the policy makers and society in general of the structural problems they face. In addition, they observed that specific policies might not be enough to solve land conflicts and promote the appreciation of the cultural diversity that characterizes those peoples’ and communities’ lifestyles.

CONCLUSION

This typological study based on the personal features and economic activities of solidarity economy workers described common aspects and differences found in the types called “family farmers” (type 1), “native peoples and traditional communities” (type 2), and “urban associated female workers” (type 3). In subgroup 1, the male presence outstood in the family farming experiences, with reduced participation of rural women and youngsters. Although their social participation and motivation to broaden their action in the SEE outstood in relation to the other groups, they also expressed the need for qualification, beyond the managerial skills to enable the recognition of the rural female work and better dynamics to involve young individuals. Since the population included in the “family farmers” type is expressive, the enterprises of this subgroup show a growing trend, provided that strategies boosting collective organization are created to diversify commercialization channels and qualification of the collective management.

Type 2 is especially relevant for grouping native peoples and traditional communities, differing from the other types named “family farmers”. In addition to revealing a more egalitarian gender profile between men and women, it demonstrated the deep inequalities that still persist in the regions of the country since it represented the type with highest vulnerability, mainly found in the regions North and Northeast. It was characterized by the lowest schooling levels and recorded the longest periods of unemployment or lack of income throughout the occupational trajectory. Additionally, individuals included in this type expressed the need for formalization of the SEE and the importance of having their own office.

Type 3 was seen to be mostly formed by women from urban areas and played a relevant role as the main income source of those workers. This type raised the discussion about the rights that must be secured by associated work, considering its importance for female occupation, mainly for black women, whose income is lower and whose inclusion in the formal job market occurs intermittently. This group gathered the highest number of young individuals, with a higher schooling level. This data suggests that the profile of female workers, and a lower percentage of male workers is also changing, and it does not seem right to say that solidarity work and income generation initiatives are limited to those with poor qualification. However, there is still a long way to go to guarantee this subgroup’s labor rights that were secured with the approval of the work cooperativism law.

Considering the importance of solidarity economy in the promotion of the socioeconomic development of remote areas in Brazil, characterized by several forms of inequalities, simple implementation of policies focusing on the enterprises by the Senaes current managers is not enough. The policies in this area must show effective transversality so that markets can be reached with more dynamism and generate a volume of economic results that guarantee social protection and better life conditions with autonomy and recognition of those that resist and keep their cultural diversity. They also must address common demands that might result in a more equal and inclusive country.

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Eliene Gomes dos Anjos: Conceptualization (Lead); Project administration (Lead); Supervision (Lead); Writing- original draft (Equal); Writing- review & editing (Equal).

Carlos Eduardo Crispim de Oliveira Ramos: Methodology (Lead); Validation (Lead); Writing- original draft (Equal); Writing- review & editing (Equal).

DATA AVAILABILITY

The whole data set supporting the results of this study is available upon request to the Secretaria Nacional de Economia Popular e Solidária (Senaes).

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