

A literature review on the Economic and Social Council's effectiveness and evaluation

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Despite its widespread trajectory and global presence, studies on Economic and Social Councils (ESCs) are not frequent. Thus, this study aims to review the existing scientific literature on this institution to identify the main thematic nuclei, agreements, and discrepancies, and detect research gaps and outline future research lines. Based on the application of the PRISMA Protocol, three emerging thematic nuclei on ESCs have been detected: the factors that explain their creation; the factors that influence their effectiveness (and condition their success), and the criteria used to evaluate their effectiveness (related to these institutions' success or failure). In short, this is the first qualitative synthesis of the international literature on ESCs, focusing on their effectiveness and evaluation. It offers elements for future intervention and studies on these institutions, especially those newly created.

Keywords: economic and social councils; national social dialogue institutions; systematic literature review; explanatory factors; effectiveness.

Conselhos econômicos e sociais. Uma revisão da literatura com foco em sua eficácia e avaliação

Apesar de sua extensa trajetória e presença global, os estudos sobre Conselhos Econômicos e Sociais (CES) não são frequentes. Assim, o objetivo é revisar a literatura científica existente sobre esta instituição a fim de identificar os principais núcleos temáticos, acordos e discrepâncias, bem como para detectar lacunas de pesquisa e delinear linhas de pesquisa futura. Com base na aplicação do Protocolo PRISMA, três núcleos temáticos emergentes sobre os CES foram detectados: os fatores que explicam sua criação; os fatores que afetam sua eficácia (e condicionam seu sucesso), e os critérios usados para avaliar sua eficácia (relacionados ao sucesso ou fracasso dessas instituições). Em suma, esta é a primeira síntese qualitativa da literatura internacional sobre o tema dos CES, focalizando sua eficácia e avaliação, o que é muito útil para futuras intervenções e estudos destas instituições, especialmente as recém-criadas.

Palavras-chave: conselhos econômicos e sociais; instituições nacionais de diálogo social; revisão sistemática da literatura; fatores explicativos; eficácia.

Consejos económicos y sociales. Una revisión de la literatura centrada en su eficacia y evaluación

Pese a su extensa trayectoria y presencia mundial, no son frecuentes los estudios sobre los consejos económicos y sociales (CES). Así pues, se pretende revisar la literatura científica existente sobre estas instituciones, a efectos de identificar los principales núcleos temáticos, acuerdos y discrepancias, como así también detectar las lagunas investigativas y esbozar líneas de investigación futuras. Basándose en la aplicación del Protocolo PRISMA, se han detectado tres núcleos temáticos emergentes sobre los CES: los factores que explican su creación; los factores que inciden en su eficacia (y condicionan su éxito), y los criterios que son utilizados para evaluar su eficacia (relacionados con el éxito o el fracaso de estas instituciones). En suma, se ofrece la primera síntesis cualitativa de la literatura internacional sobre la temática de los CES, centrada en su eficacia y evaluación, de gran utilidad para la intervención y el estudio futuros sobre estas instituciones, especialmente las de nueva creación.

Palabras clave: consejos económicos y sociales; instituciones nacionales de diálogo social; revisión sistemática de literatura; factores explicativos; eficacia.

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1. INTRODUCTION

There has been great scientific interest in social dialogue and its institutions in recent years. This proliferation of scientific literature is partly a result of the difficulties of social dialogue that emerged in a context of austerity and unilateral governmental decisions in developed countries after the economic crisis of 2008. However, National Social Dialogue Institutions (NSDIs), formal channels of participation in public life for national socio-economic organisations, lived through challenges that were not studied equally. This neglect was even greater in the case of Economic and Social Councils (ESCs), institutions that had great relevance in the past.

Social dialogue refers to all types of negotiation or exchange of information maintained over time between representatives of governments, employers and workers on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2020). It may be informal, but it may also be formalised in NSDIs of very diverse characteristics, depending on the type of relationship between state and market where they exist. NSDIs are able to exchange information, act in a coordinated fashion between actors in disputes and, from a communicative action approach (Habermas, S. Lennox, & F. Lennox, 1974), convert sectoral discourse into collective discourse on the great national problems (Regan, 2010).

Among the profuse variety of existing NSDIs, ESCs are a widespread alternative at global level. So much so that, at present, there are ESCs in 161 national states (Guardiancich & Ghellab, 2020), and two new ones have been created in recent years: the Economic and Social Consultative Council (CCES) of Costa Rica in 2020, and the ESC of the Argentine Republic in 2021. Their creation and strengthening have been promoted by the European Union (EU) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), among other international bodies. Moreover, there are organisations that group these ESCs together, such as the International Association of Economic and Social Councils (AICESIS) or the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Economic and Social Councils (CESALC).

Despite their importance, ESCs have been neglected by the literature that deals with NSDIs. International bodies have conducted both comparative studies and case studies on European ESCs (Chabanet & Trechsel, 2011; Molina & Guardiancich, 2017) and at global level (Consejo Económico y Social de España, 2014; Montalvo-Correa, 2005). However, no review of the scientific literature on these institutions has been carried out. Consequently, we know very little about the development, achievements, and fundamental challenges of this specific area of research.

The basic aim of this paper, therefore, is to systematically review the literature (Gough, Thomas, & Oliver, 2012) corresponding to ESCs in order to provide the first qualitative synthesis of the international literature on this research area (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). Based on the application of the PRISMA protocol and a theoretical and empirically qualitative synthesis consistent with the evidence from case studies (Thomas & Harden, 2008), our review detects three emerging thematic

clusters in the study of ESCs: a) the factors that explain their creation; b) the factors that influence their effectiveness; c) the criteria used to evaluate their effectiveness. These results will not only be useful for focusing new research in this respect, but they also have important implications for ESCs, especially those that are newly created. The "context-sensitive" review (Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003) of governments and socio-economic organisations makes it possible to present a set of regularities and conditions necessary (based on empirical studies) to create a successful ESC (and on what terms), shedding light on the academic debate, without overlooking its usefulness for policymaking.

To achieve the aims set out, the paper is organised in the following way. First, a definition of ESC is provided, and how ESCs relate to NSDIs in general and to the institutional models of capitalism indicated by the literature is clarified. Subsequently, the analytical approach and methodology of the systematic literature review and its qualitative synthesis are developed. The results are then presented, and this is followed by a discussion of these results. Finally, the conclusions of the study are drawn.

2. DEFINITION OF ESC, RELATIONSHIP WITH NSDIs AND INSTITUTIONAL MODELS OF CAPITALISM

In conceptual terms, ESCs are traditionally characterised as neo-corporatist institutions (Guardiancich & Molina, 2021), in which the state shares the design and implementation of public policies with civil society organisations that are considered relevant due to their capacity for intermediation, mobilisation and representation of a specific socio-economic base (Lehmbruch, 1977; Panitch, 1977; Schmitter, 1989, p. 86).

ESCs can be distinguished from other NSDIs in that they engage the participation of the socio-economic partners in discussions that transcend the field of industrial relations. In the words of M. Richardson, S. Richardson, & J. Richardson (1996), this means moving on from "distributive negotiation" to "integrative negotiation". Thus, it is normal for ESCs to co-exist with other, often bipartite, forums dedicated exclusively to labour matters, such as minimum wage commissions or collective bargaining institutions.

By focusing on producing agreements and reinforcing the legitimacy of public decisions on general socio-economic issues, laws, and policies, ESCs can also be distinguished by their need for validation by the government and/or parliament, which is who their opinions are normally addressed to. This "ratification requirement" (Fashoyin, 2004) means that, to a large extent, an ESC is effective if the agreements reached within the council are adopted by a political authority, unlike what happens, for example, with collective bargaining institutions.

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Evidently, the countries that have developed NSDIs with greater profusion are the European social democratic and continental "social partnership" countries. In countries with integrated corporatist

structures, such as Austria or Finland, with strong and institutionalised participation of the social actors, ESCs are important forums where the strategies of collective action are defined (Guardiancich & Molina, 2021). Meanwhile, in the Netherlands, it has even been affirmed that the *Sociaal-Economische Raad* (SER) co-determines governmental policy (Hemerijck & Vail, 2006) and is the main guarantor of the successful polder model (Banck, 2007; Dekker, Bekker, & Cremers, 2017). Other ESCs, such as the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) of Ireland (Regan, 2010), a country which is classified, according to Amable (2003), within the group of continental “social partnership” countries, did not produce recommendations that translated into specific actions, but they did build important consensus between the social partners. Mediterranean countries such as Spain, Portugal and Italy also have a notable tradition of ESCs.

Encouraged by the achievements of the European social model, the EU has promoted ESCs to strengthen the processes of transition to democracy in Central and Eastern Europe (Börzel & Buzogány, 2010; Kohl & Platzer, 2007; Spasova & Tomini, 2013). This has been compatible with policies recommending tough regulations of neoliberal inspiration in a large part of Europe. Around the mid-1990s, the orthodox reforms imposed by Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) served to adjust the social welfare model and reform the labour market towards the so-called “competitive neo-corporatism” (Ferrera, Hemerijck & Rhodes, 2001).

More capitalist archetypes have been defined to cover peripheral areas of the world, such as the segmented business system (tropical Africa), hierarchical market economies (Latin America), family capitalism (in Asian countries other than Japan and Korea) and the oil-based growth regimes (Middle Eastern petro-states). With the exception of the petro-states, the models enumerated are characterised by a limited formal sector, supplemented by large unregulated or informal sectors and paternalistic authoritarian management (Wilkinson & Wood, 2017). Other authors, critical of these generalisations, have pointed out that peripheral countries possess a great diversity and wealth of varieties of capitalism (Fernández & Alfaro, 2011), defined by the type of peripheral inclusion in the global market (Madariaga, 2018), more than by local business strategies, which makes it possible to speak of “divergent types of peripheral capitalism” (Bizberg, 2014; Bizberg & Théret, 2012). Furthermore, in Latin America, the state played a decisive role in the formation and dynamics of capitalism, being the main productive agent and promoter of economic change (Lo Vuolo, 2013).

In any case, these institutional and economic frameworks are very different from European ones, where ESCs have attained the greatest development. Despite these singularities, the ILO understood that ESCs and other NSDIs could facilitate the consent of unions and companies without need for the coercive force of governments, in particular in societies in transition towards democracy, such as South Korea (Han, Jang, & Kim, 2010) and South Africa (Kim & Van Der Westhuizen, 2017). In Latin American countries, such as Brazil, ESCs have also been highlighted for their capacity to contribute to economic and social governance (Doctor, 2007). Although having little power and few resources, ESCs of the region made it possible to reduce the transaction costs and the political wear and tear of the government in its relationship with the legislative power, by strengthening and legitimising draft bills before sending them to parliament (Santos & Gugliano, 2015).

3. ANALYTICAL APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The review runs from the year 2008, as this was the start of the Great Recession that convulsed the developed West and consolidated a much more multipolar world with the economic emergence of other countries. This year, moreover, marked the beginning of austerity policies in Europe (which also contrast with the policies adopted in other regions of the world), influential in the debilitation of NSDIs (Guardiancich & Ghellab, 2020) demographic and climate change as well as globalization require timely responses from the actors involved in social dialogue and the institutions charged with it, such as the national Economic and Social Councils (ESCs and triggering changes in the research approach. Although many studies point out that the difficulties of these institutions were already evident previously (Bordogna & Pedersini, 2013), there is consensus on the fact that the recession accelerated their decline. Additionally, this year ensures a good number of updated — and current — contributions.

The research question guiding the study is: what topics, methodologies and conclusions does the scientific literature on ESCs from 2008 to the present show? Naturally, the reply to this question has important implications for the self-assessment and evaluation of these institutions and for future scientific research. The different institutional environments of the models of capitalism described in the previous section will, of course, be taken as a framework in order to respond to the question and to present the final results of the article.

The method chosen for the selection of the sample is the PRISMA protocol (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, & Altman, 2009). Following its steps, first, a search was conducted in three databases and a filter based on inclusion and exclusion criteria was applied. Subsequently, the temporal distribution of the studies, their geographical location and the research designs used were analysed (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). Finally, the qualitative synthesis of literature was carried out on the basis of a thematic analysis approach (Thomas & Harden, 2008). The compilation of data was performed using three relevant international databases, two of them general (World of Science – WOS – and Scopus) and the other specialised in the field of political science (Political Science Database – PSD). The inclusion and exclusion criteria to select studies from the databases are shown below:

BOX 1 INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA FOR THE LITERATURE SEARCH

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Research published since 2008	Editorials, letters, books, book chapters, conferences
Research focusing on the subject of ESCs	Studies before 2008
Type of document: scientific article	Research focusing on NSDIs other than ESCs, which are
Priority to studies from “Social Sciences” research areas	not considered as subject of study.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Following the recommendations for a database search provided in Sunny and Angadi (2017), the keywords were taken from the thesauruses of ILO and UNESCO, as instruments of knowledge representation. To ensure precision in the search, inverted commas (") were used and terms were connected by means of Boolean operators (AND/OR/NOT). The equation established with each database can be seen in Box 2.

BOX 2 SPECIFICATIONS OF THE SEARCH

Base	Specifications of the search	No. articles
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Economic and Social Council" AND NOT ecosoc) AND PUBYEAR > 2007 TITLE-ABS-KEY ("National Social Dialogue Institution" OR "National Social Dialogue Institutions" OR "Social Dialogue Institutions" OR "Neocorporatism" OR "Neocorporatist") AND PUBYEAR > 2007 Refined by: TYPE OF DOCUMENT: (ARTICLE)	60
WoS	TS="Economic and Social Council" NOT ecosoc TS=("National Social Dialogue Institution" OR "National Social Dialogue Institutions" OR "Social Dialogue Institutions") AND "Neocorporatism" OR "Neocorporatist" Refined by: TYPE OF DOCUMENT: (ARTICLE) YEAR OF PUBLICATION (2008-2021)	58
PSD	"Economic and social councils" ("National Social Dialogue Institution" OR "National Social Dialogue Institutions" OR "Social Dialogue Institutions") AND "Neocorporatism" OR "Neocorporatist" Refined by: TYPE OF DOCUMENT: (ARTICLE) YEAR OF PUBLICATION (2008-2021)	103

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Following the phases of search and review of the literature based on the PRISMA procedure, the initial 221 articles passed through multiple filters (selection is explained in the Annex). First, the articles repeated in the databases were eliminated. Second, the abstracts were read, and the inclusion/exclusion criteria were applied with a qualitative approach to corroborate their thematic appropriateness (only research that included ESCs within the analysis were chosen). This filter produced a result of 44 scientific articles. However, many of these articles studied NSDIs in general and only mentioned ESCs marginally. A new selection isolated only articles focusing on the ESCs.

The resultant database that has been used for the study is composed of a total of 22 articles. As has been pointed out, there is always tension between the "statistical benefits of including a large number of primary studies and conducting high quality reviews of fewer studies with the use of more selective methodological criteria of inclusion and exclusion" (Tranfield et al., 2003, p. 215). In this respect, a review based on samples of qualitative studies, unlike a quantitative meta-analysis of articles, does not necessarily have to be exhaustive and numerous (Thomas & Harden, 2008), given that it is the interpretative explanation of the concepts that is sought and not the probabilistic

prediction. "Conceptual saturation" is not the most appropriate strategy for a synthesis of qualitative research and, in this case, expanding the sample with documents that studied other NSDIs and only mentioned ESCs marginally would have distorted the results.

Establishing criteria to determine whether a qualitative study is "relevant" is a challenge (Engel & Kuzel, 1992). The selection of the final sample was based on the internal validity of the study, the pertinence of the research questions, the quality of the methodology and data and theoretical appropriateness.

The fact that, with strict selective criteria, the sample is reduced to 22 articles constitutes a first significant result, as it highlights the limitations of academic analysis in this specific field. Studies within this field have focused on international bodies (Molina & Guardiancich, 2017) and national governmental institutions (Pereira, 2020), and in some cases they have been presented in other formats, such as lectures or presentations (Carneiro & Gambi, 2018). Finally, despite their relevance, studies that fell outside the established temporal framework were discarded (Angrist, 1999; Doctor, 2007), among other inclusion and exclusion criteria.

BOX 3 EMERGING THEMATIC CLUSTERS ON ESCS

No.	Thematic cluster	Appearances	Description
1	Conditions of success/failure	22	Factors that influence the effectiveness (and condition the success) of the ESC.
2	Evaluation effectiveness	22	Criteria used to evaluate the effectiveness (related to success or failure) of the ESC. Take the form of "responses", "achievements", "impact" of the ESC.
3	Creation factors	20	Factors that explain the creation of the ESC.
4	Collaboration democratisation process	7	ESC as a tool of consolidation of social dialogue and, ultimately, democracy in the 1990s.
5	Collaboration Europeanisation process	6	ESC as part of the process of enlargement of the EU and its constraints (network governance, European social model) in the 1990s.
6	Impact of the economic crisis	5	ESC in the context of the impact of the economic crisis of 2008.
7	Industrial relations/labour market	3	ESC as a strictly industrial relations institution. Mechanism to strengthen tripartite dialogue and the governance of the labour market.
8	Power coalitions	3	ESC as institutional arrangement where socio-economic and political power coalitions crystallise/manifest themselves. Constellations of interests, more than institutional or organisational questions. Types of class alliance.
9	Building hegemonies/consensuses	2	Potential for communication and dialogue of the ESC, with the aim of creating hegemonic discourses of coordination.
10	Correspondence with models of capitalism	2	Correspondence of the ESC with the model of capitalism in which it develops.
11	Relationship with EP and LP	2	Specific forms of cooperation and coordination between the Executive/Legislative and the ESC.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Having selected the sample, an analysis of topics was subsequently performed in order to detect emerging clusters. Thematic synthesis (Noblit & Hare, 1998; Thomas & Harden, 2008) is appropriate for analysing qualitative studies and involves, as a first step, describing and grouping the results of the primary studies and, as a second step, going beyond a mere thematic exposition to generate new interpretative constructions. Hence, the results of the studies were codified with the assistance of the qualitative software Nvivo 12, and categorised with the aim of detecting the potentially relevant thematic clusters (Box 3).

After identifying the three most recurrent clusters, the next step was to establish a hierarchy and group similar clusters together, which involves the “translation” of concepts from one study to another (Thomas & Harden, 2008). For example, the capacity to build consensus (cluster 9) is associated with the effectiveness of the ESC and the form of evaluating it. In this respect, topics were grouped as sub-dimensions of the three main clusters (Box 4, in Results), in a hierarchical tree structure.

4. RESULTS

The articles that analyse ESCs in Europe (Guardiancich & Molina, 2021; Hassel, 2009; Regan, 2010), Turkey (Çelik, 2020) and South Korea (Kim & Van Der Westhuizen, 2017; Yang, 2010) coincide in indicating a tipping point in the analysis after the economic crisis of 2008, thereby confirming the appropriate choice of year to start the review. From this viewpoint, the institutions associated with competitive neo-corporatism were in good health until the crisis. The austerity policies applied unilaterally by governments and the weakness of the unions put their validity in doubt. Logically, this emphasis on the economic crisis is far less pronounced in articles that deal with the ESCs of peripheral countries, such as Brazil (Patschiki, 2016; Santos & Gugliano, 2015).

With respect to their geographical distribution, most of the articles come from European universities. Turkish universities produce a smaller number of publications, and South Korea and Brazil are situated at an intermediate point. The lack of studies from the United States could be due to little interest in institutions of extra-market coordination.

With respect to the temporal distribution, an increase in research was registered in 2010, with the rest of studies being evenly distributed. Three articles were published in *Acta Politica*, and only two in *Journal of Industrial Relations*, while the rest are dispersed. The aims and approaches of the studies on ESCs are varied. However, there are few articles that tackle the theoretical discussion on the institution. Guardiancich and Ghellab (2020) and Guardiancich and Molina (2021) try to draw generalisations from a wide sample of cases, and Regan (2010) also seeks to overcome the theoretical dichotomy between macro-exogenous and micro-endogenous factors that affect the consolidation of ESCs. However, it is perhaps Hassel (2009) who goes furthest in this respect, by classifying ESCs (and other NSDIs) according to categories of corporatism. On the contrary, most studies focus on specific experiences, discussing the conditions that led to the creation of the ESCs (Börzel, 2010; Börzel & Buzogány, 2010; Carneiro & Gambi, 2018; Çiçek & Öçal, 2019), explaining their limitations (Çelik, 2020; Cho, 2019; Kim & Van Der Westhuizen, 2017; Patschiki, 2016) and strengths (Fashoyin, 2009; Han et al., 2010; Regan, 2010), evaluating their degree of effectiveness (Santos & Gugliano, 2015), the conditions for their strengthening (Grosse, 2010; Hassel, 2009; Spasova & Tomini, 2013), the challenges they face in a globalised world (Guardiancich & Ghellab,

2020) and their relationship with sub-national ESCs (Inzunza-Canales, 2018; Pressacco & Rivera, 2015; Ramírez-Sáiz, 2013; Santos, 2016).

Most of the studies focus on analyses based on the field of political science, although there are also analytical elements taken from history (Kim & Van Der Westhuizen, 2017), economics (Carneiro & Gambi, 2018), industrial relations (Fashoyin, 2009) and even philosophy (Regan, 2010).

As for case studies of ESCs, these are usually concentrated in Europe: Denmark, the Netherlands (Cho, 2019) and Ireland (Regan, 2010) in Western Europe; Bulgaria (Spasova & Tomini, 2013), Poland and Estonia (Grosse, 2010), Poland, Hungary and Romania (Börzel & Buzogány, 2010) in Eastern and Central Europe. Outside Europe, the following cases have been studied: Brazil (Carneiro & Gambi, 2018; Patschiki, 2016; Santos & Gugliano, 2015), South Korea (Han et al., 2010), South Africa (Fashoyin, 2009) and Turkey (Çelik, 2020; Çiçek & Öçal, 2019), and also comparisons between countries: South Africa and South Korea (Kim & Van Der Westhuizen, 2017); Italy, South Korea and Brazil (Guardiancich & Molina, 2021). Very few studies have been carried out at global level (Guardiancich & Ghellab, 2020) or European level (Hassel, 2009), or the focus is on regional analyses, such as Central and Eastern Europe (Börzel, 2010).

With regard to research methods, case studies and qualitative methodologies predominate in the articles. Interpretative strategies of the discourses of the participants have been implemented (Regan, 2010), the challenges that the organisations themselves identify at national and global level are taken into consideration (Guardiancich & Molina, 2021), the historical path of national social dialogue is described (Han et al., 2010) or the institutional and regulatory characteristics of the institution are outlined (Santos & Gugliano, 2015). However, quantitative analyses of ESCs are not normally performed, and these are usually restricted to partial aspects. The only research that has advanced in the quantitative analysis of an ESC is the study of Han et al. (2010), which evaluates the results of the South Korean ESC in terms of the negative impact on the labour market.

On the contrary, the following are common: ethnographic techniques of data collection, such as participant observation, in-depth interviews, informal conversations and questionnaires (Guardiancich & Ghellab, 2020; Regan, 2010); and the analysis of written speeches, the rules governing ESC creation and functioning (Santos & Gugliano, 2015), the EU regulations promoting these institutions (Grosse, 2010), the minutes of meetings and details of agreements signed (Regan, 2010) and other documents (Ramírez-Sáiz, 2013). The studies also combine techniques: Santos (2016), for example uses participant observation and documentary analysis; Guardiancich and Molina (2021) combine an analysis of the results of a global survey of ESCs with detailed case studies in Brazil, Italy and South Korea; Spasova and Tomini (2013) resort to a bibliographical review and an analysis of newspapers, national and EU official documents, and semi-structured interviews with union and business representatives and foreign experts.

Having set out the general aspects of the studies, the results of the thematic analysis of the three recurrent clusters of interest of the research that emerge from the literature review are shown below.

BOX 4 THEMATIC CLUSTERS OF ESC LITERATURE AND ASSOCIATED SUB-TOPICS (WITH THE NUMBER OF APPEARANCES)

No.	Thematic cluster	Specific associated sub-topics
1	Creation factors (20)	Collaboration democratisation process (7); Collaboration Europeanisation process (6).
2	Conditions of success/failure (22)	Impact of the economic crisis (5); Industrial relations/labour market (3); Power coalitions (3); Correspondence with models of capitalism (2); Relationship with EP and LP (2).
3	Evaluation effectiveness (22)	Responses to the economic crisis (5); Results in the labour market (3); Building hegemonies/consensuses (2); Results of the democratisation process (7); Europeanisation (6).

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

4.1. Factors that explain the creation of ESCs

There have been diverse “waves” of ESC creation (Santos & Gugliano, 2015), such as one after the Second World War and the consolidation of the welfare state (Çelik, 2020), one related to the transition to democracy in Central and Eastern European countries or, at the end of the twentieth century, another linked to the exhaustion of the neoliberal paradigm in peripheral countries, where it was vital to increase social participation in order to alleviate the crisis of representativeness.

The literature reviewed usually distinguishes between macro-exogenous and micro-endogenous conditions as explanatory factors of the creation of ESCs (Regan, 2010). The former refer to great events or external pressures, such as an economic crisis or the requirements of an international body. The latter refer to the internal political, social, and economic circumstances of the country and its social actors. A dialogue is maintained between both dimensions, exogenous and endogenous, of course, but the research usually concentrates on one or the other.

A first group of authors tend to consider above all the macro-exogenous factors. In this respect, a large part of the literature focuses on the group of ESCs created to meet the EU's convergence requirements in the 1990s (Spasova & Tomini, 2013). The formation of an ESC in Turkey, for example, can be explained by the possibility, although remote, of accession to the EU. Both Çelik (2020) and Çiçek and Öçal (2019) point out that the ESC and the tripartite advisory committee were created to adapt Turkish social dialogue to the structures of the European social model. During the signing of the Customs Union Treaty in 1995, Turkey finally created the ESC.

The enlargement of the EU towards the east of Europe also facilitated inaugurations of different ESCs. As part of the European conditionalities, the ex-socialist states had to create institutionalised

spaces of participation for socio-economic organisations such as ESCs. According to Börzel (2010), this adaptation was encouraged by means of financial and technical assistance, with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), emblematic institution of the European social model, also serving as an example.

The demands of the EU, however, did not necessarily involve national socio-economic organisations. In the cases of Poland, Hungary and Romania, Börzel and Buzogány (2010) show that the process of accession left little room for the participation of non-state actors, which were often too weak. Grosse (2010) arrives at similar conclusions when studying the creation of the ESC in Estonia and the Tripartite Commission in Poland. His research demonstrates that the institutionalisation of social dialogue merely resulted in the transfer of a vast number of community regulations, whose modification by local actors was not allowed.

Hassel (2009), meanwhile, affirms that although the main explanatory factor is related to EU accession, in some cases the ESCs had already been created by the ex-socialist governments after the collapse of the Soviet bloc with the aim of postponing the loss of power and also, in many cases, to meet the demands for economic reform of rapidly expanding companies. In all cases, the state played a fundamental role in promoting the ESCs, in the light of historically weak corporate organisations. In the same vein, Spasova and Tomini (2013) affirm that the creation of the ESC of Bulgaria responded to conditionalities of the EU¹, but also to circumstances of national actors, in particular the government. "Illusory corporatism", or "fictitious corporatism" (Angrist, 1999), was an institutional ploy intended to legitimise the system, and in many cases European demands strengthened these incipient processes.

An analysis of the creation of ESCs in other parts of the world reveals greater geographical dispersion (South Korea, South Africa and Brazil), but also makes a distinction between macro-exogenous and micro-endogenous factors. Han et al. (2010) indicate that the main reasons for the creation of the ESC of South Korea, the Korean Tripartite Commission (KTC) in 1998, were mainly macro-exogenous, although it also responded to internal political causes. On the one hand, during the financial crisis of 1997, the IMF required the South Korean government to implement a package of neoliberal reforms in exchange for an economic bailout. The government thus created the KTC to engage the social partners and commit them to compliance with the tough conditions. On the other hand, the South Korean "double transition" of democratisation and economic liberalisation was also influential, with demands for a programme of socially endorsed reforms.

After performing a comparative analysis of the reasons for the creation of the KTC in South Korea and the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) in South Africa, Kim and Van Der Westhuizen (2017) point to a confluence of internal and external factors. In South Korea, large companies, criticised as being responsible for the crisis of 1997-1998, supported the creation of the KTC as a way of demonstrating their willingness to share the burden and also as an opportunity to promote liberalising reforms. The South Korean trade unions also backed the creation of the KTC,

¹ The authors point out that the ILO was even more relevant than the EU in the first half of the 1990s. The EU did not enter the region in earnest until 1997.

out of fear of being excluded from economic policy. In South Africa, black workers, and employees in sectors such as metallurgy and mining came to a similar diagnosis with respect to NEDLAC. The authors also highlight external factors. After democratisation, both countries faced pressure from the ILO and the OECD to create and strengthen NSDIs. There had effectively been an extension of competitive corporatism at global level, not only in Western Europe.

The creation of the Brazilian Council for Economic and Social Development (*Conselho de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social*; hereinafter CDES) can be explained exclusively by endogenous factors. Carneiro and Gambi (2018) point out that the crisis of legitimacy of Brazilian representative democracy, a product of inequality, poverty and unemployment in the late twentieth century, gave rise to an attempt to broaden participation via institutionalised social dialogue, which led to the formation of the CDES in 2003. Santos and Gugliano (2015) agree with the demise of the neoliberal paradigm in Brazil and the need for greater participation, already embodied in the creation of conferences, sub-national ESCs (Santos, 2016) and other participatory forums. Patschiki (2016) coincides in indicating the crisis of representation, but, from a Marxist perspective, also introduces an economic factor: the São Paulo business community supported the creation of the CDES as an instrument intended to consolidate competitive neo-corporatism and influence the government's economic policy. Carneiro and Gambi (2018) qualify these statements, pointing out that the government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, with working-class roots, looked to the CDES as an instrument to represent and coordinate the interests of the political and economic elites, and thereby increase the strength of the government of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT). This greater emphasis on internal factors is in line with peripheral varieties of capitalism, which Bizberg and Théret (2012) depicted as being “of state administration and geared towards the domestic market”, where the Brazilian state sought to coordinate a neo-developmental social coalition.

4.2. Factors that influence the effectiveness of ESCs

There is consensus in the reviewed literature about the fact that external incentives — such as the conditionalities of the EU (Hassel, 2009) or pressure from the IMF (Han et al., 2010) — usually diminish over time. For this reason, the effectiveness of ESCs, and their sustainability over time, are more conditioned by internal factors, most notable among which are usually those listed by Avritzer (2008): institutional design, organisation of civil society and the political will of the government to facilitate participation. One of these factors, or a combination of them, usually explains the effectiveness of ESCs according to the literature.

For Guardiancich and Ghellab (2020) demographic and climate change as well as globalization require timely responses from the actors involved in social dialogue and the institutions charged with it, such as the national Economic and Social Councils (ESCs and Guardiancich and Molina (2021), the effectiveness of ESCs depends on the organisational capacity of the institution (leadership of government authorities, budget allocation, technical training of personnel, etc.), the characteristics of the corporate actors (organisational capacity, motivation, confidence and balance between them) and, fundamentally, the government's commitment to promoting the ESC as part of the process of drawing up substantive political policies, which reflects the real role of the institution in social dialogue. Guardiancich and Ghellab (2020) show that from the crisis of 2008 it was normal, above all in the European Union, for the government to resort to unilateralism, considering social dialogue to be ineffective as a means of coming

up with speedy responses to resolve social problems. Governmental unilateralism was accompanied by a decline in union and employer density, a lack of confidence between social partners, the decentralisation of collective bargaining and a preference of social actors for informal pressure, which has also had a negative impact on the effectiveness of many ESCs in recent years.

Despite the present situation, the effectiveness of the ESCs of Northern Europe stands out. Cho (2019) shows that the ESCs of Denmark and the Netherlands are successful due to their long institutional tradition, the mutual confidence between parties, the strength of the socio-labour actors and the government's respect for the results of the debate. However, this author also indicates a number of risk factors: the automation of work, the polarisation of incomes, the increase in informal, temporary and migrant workers, and an insufficient social security network.

Regan (2010), for his part, studies the NESC of Ireland using an original Habermasian discursive-procedural approach, which departs from the typical explanations of the effectiveness of ESCs. His study highlights the limitations of exogenous explanations (the entry of Ireland into the EMU did not affect the institutionalisation of social dialogue), and endogenous factors that only focus on the organisation, resolve and strength of unions, employers and the government, given that, even in a country with a decentralised industrial relations model, the NESC was effective. For Regan, what enabled the success of the NESC was the construction of a political discourse of effective coordination. The ideas of "competitiveness" and "small open economy" constituted strategic objectives that underpinned an ideological hegemony after the economic crisis of 1987, oriented the economic coordination of the actors in the labour market, allowed the government to develop a strategic management of industrial relations and consolidated the NESC as the country's main NSDI.

On the contrary, studies on Eastern Europe underline the ineffectiveness of ESCs and seek to explain this by pointing to the excessive predominance of the government in social dialogue and the persistent weakness of the social partners, especially the unions. The study of Estonia and Poland has led to the conclusion that the new NSDIs were determined by the basic traits of socialist culture and the centralist state model, and this generally favoured the old methods of government, the hierarchical management of public policies and the governmental absorption of the NSDIs (Börzel, 2010; Grosse, 2010). Hassel (2009) also confirms the dysfunctions of the Eastern European councils, indicating the absence of two necessary conditions which, on the contrary, were maintained in Western Europe until a few decades ago: the government's dependence on union cooperation and, in parallel, the substantive capacity of the unions to cooperate.

In contrast, on analysing the ESC of Turkey, Çelik (2020) concludes that it was mainly the institutional design that determined its ineffectiveness. It is a "paper" institution due to the lack of legal obligation of the government to convene it, the unequal composition of the plenary and the lack of internal regulations. Institutional design is also considered by Guardiancich and Ghellab (2020), Guardiancich and Molina (2021) and Santos and Gugliano (2015), who add the importance of resources, clear decision-making procedures, and a legal mandate.

In their study of the KTC in South Korea, Han et al. (2010) state that union intervention in the institution was conditioned by the historical exclusion of workers from public decision making,

the fragmentation of the labour movement and a decentralised collective bargaining structure. The government unilaterally overruled many of the agreements reached in the KTC and moreover the employers' organisations ignored the forum. This power imbalance between social partners has also been also identified by other authors as being responsible for the ineffectiveness of the KTC (Cho, 2019; Guardiancich & Molina, 2021). Furthermore, Kim and Van Der Westhuizen (2017) added the impact of globalisation and the greater flexibility of the labour market as further limitations, as well as the inability of unions to organise the growing number of casual or temporary workers and include them in the corporate institutions.

In South Africa, as in South Korea, the influence of workers gradually and progressively diminished. For Kim and Van Der Westhuizen (2017), the NEDLAC, following a similar path to the KTC, simply institutionalised the asymmetrical balance of power between the social partners and, when not being used by the government and companies to legitimise a neoliberal economic programme, the institution was excluded from the political process, consolidating an illusory corporatism.

In the case of Brazil, Carneiro and Gambi (2018) and Patschiki (2016) argue that, when Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva became president in 2003, the business sector understood that pressure on socio-economic policies could be exerted through the CDES. The new government, more inclined towards the interests of workers, strengthened the NSDIs in general, such as the National Labour Forum (FNT) or the Deliberative Council of the Workers Assistance Fund (CODEFAT), where the unions and the state had greater presence, but the CDES was given pride of place as the key institution to consolidate an alliance with the São Paulo industrialists that would make it possible to build a broader development agenda. Both factors (support from the government and from powerful industrial companies) converted the institution, at least in its first period, into a relatively important instrument for achieving consensus which, despite a lack of specific proposals, brought the positions of the political and economic elites closer. However, as affirmed by Carneiro and Gambi (2018), the effectiveness of the CDES was too dependent on the determination and resolve of the executive, which led Guardiancich and Molina (2021) to identify the CDES as a clear example of political vulnerability. Santos and Gugliano (2015) add that its effectiveness was also conditioned by a poor institutional design and the limited capacity of the socio-economic organisations, particularly social movements, and unions.

4.3. Evaluation of the effectiveness of ESCs

The literature reviewed coincides in the importance of demonstrating the achievements of ESCs. For Guardiancich and Molina (2021) and Santos and Gugliano (2015) it is necessary to improve the techniques for measuring the effectiveness of these institutions, as there is a methodological vacuum in this respect.

The significance of the effectiveness of an ESC has certain contrasts. For Guardiancich and Molina (2021), the ESCs may be evaluated as structures of representation of interests, that is, be observed in the light of their degree of "inclusiveness" (which actors are represented) and their degree of representativeness (whether the organisations fully reflect the workers, employers and civil society as a whole). This makes it possible to assess the democratic quality of the processes of consultation and

participation. This dimension of effectiveness is taken into consideration in the case of the Turkish ESC, in which the unequal composition of the plenary is notable (Çelik, 2020), and is particularly emphasised in the CDES of Brazil, where there is an overrepresentation of the São Paulo industrial sector (Santos, 2016; Santos & Gugliano, 2015). Along similar lines, Carneiro and Gambi (2018) conclude that the institution did not successfully overcome the crisis of representative democracy. On the contrary, from a Marxist perspective, Patschiki (2016) concludes that the CDES had a negative effectiveness as it contributed to the construction of the hegemony necessary to implement neoliberal counter-reforms under a government close to the workers.

Nevertheless, most of the authors reviewed focus on the influence of ESCs on the policymaking process, more than on the representativeness of the social partners, although both dimensions are intertwined. Guardiancich and Molina (2021) consider the “legitimacy of the result” more important: the capacity of ESCs to intervene in the resolution of public problems. This capacity, however, may be evaluated from different dimensions. The first refers to “instrumental or political effectiveness”, the extent to which the opinions and recommendations of the ESC are transformed into specific public policies. The second is the “effectiveness of the agenda”, which evaluates the capacity to exert an influence on public issues, political parties, and government leaders. The third dimension refers to “analytical effectiveness”, the capacity of the ESC and the social partners to analyse problems rigorously and provide valuable recommendations for the state and for society. The authors emphasise that the first dimension of effectiveness is usually limited by the limited real power of most ESCs.

Instrumental effectiveness is the most evaluated by the literature. Cho (2019) ascribes the success of the ESC of Denmark to its capacity to set conditions in the labour market, and the success of the SER in the Netherlands to its role in the co-determination of competitiveness policies since the 1980s. When evaluating the Irish NESC, Regan (2010) argues that the various social collaboration agreements and documents drawn up since 1987 made it possible to develop consensual strategies of collective action between the government and social actors.

Following the same approach, Hassel (2009) concludes that the results of the consultation processes in Eastern Europe did not in general lead to a substantive regulation. Börzel and Buzogány (2010) analyse the participation of the ESCs of Poland, Hungary and Romania in the implementation of the EU’s environmental policies, demonstrating the limited effectiveness of these bodies. Grosse (2010) shows the incapacity of the ESCs in Poland and Estonia to affect the different policies and laws necessary in the EU accession process. Spasova and Tomini (2013) also confirm the scant influence of the Bulgarian ESC.

In the same vein, Çelik (2020) considers that the Turkish ESC became a dysfunctional and symbolic institution, ineffective in the constitutional amendments of 2010, the changes to the union laws in 2012 and the economic crisis of 2018.

Han et al. (2010) indicate that the KTC of South Korea was not effective in generating agreements to strengthen job security, or in reducing the antagonism between unions and employers. Kim and Van Der Westhuizen (2017) reach similar conclusions. Their comparison between the KTC and the South African NEDLAC seeks to measure the influence of both institutions on the most relevant parliamentary laws and socio-economic policies of the government in recent years, demonstrating their ineffectiveness.

In the case of the CDES of Brazil, there are dissenting opinions on its degree of instrumental effectiveness. Carneiro and Gambi (2018) and Patschiki (2016), although they highlight the bias in

favour of companies and the more developed south, emphasise the success of the CDES in building consensus of the competitive corporatist type. Santos and Gugliano (2015), on the contrary, conclude that between 2003 and 2012 the influence of the CDES was very limited in the process of public policymaking. Santos (2016) measures the impact of the CDES de Rio Grande do Sul (CDES-RS) compared with that of the national CDES, not only in terms of its instrumental effectiveness, but also evaluating its effectiveness of agenda, an aspect barely touched on by the studies reviewed. Both institutions show a limited capacity to influence the agenda and public policymaking.

5. DISCUSSING A SUBJECT NEGLECTED BY THE SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE: WHAT CONDITIONS THE CREATION AND SUCCESS OF ESCS, AND HOW TO EVALUATE THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

Despite their extended worldwide presence and the positive assessment of ESCs by many international bodies and social partners, there are very few academic articles that concentrate on studying them specifically, and they are often analysed among a number of NSDIs. In this study, by applying selective criteria of inclusion and exclusion (Tranfield et al., 2003), a qualitative synthesis was performed on a limited number of high-quality studies in order to achieve significant results (Thomas & Harden, 2008). In any case, the important gap in academic research speaks for itself.

The present study only selected scientific articles, without taking into account the “grey” literature of the ILO or the EU EUROsociAL+ programme, international associations of ESCs (AICESIS, CESALC, etc.) or the national ESCs themselves. This avoids the bias of these bodies with interests that obviously go beyond knowledge generation.

Based on the application of the PRISMA protocol (see Annex) and the subsequent thematic analysis, three emerging clusters were detected in the academic literature on ESCs: the factors that explain their creation, those that condition their effectiveness and, finally, the criteria that determine the success or the failure of these institutions. As has been indicated (Tranfield et al., 2003), the results of a qualitative review enable greater conceptual development than is possible with an individual empirical study. The results of this study are useful in this respect, as they allow a general deliberation of multiple and very different cases and will also be useful to “policymakers” and to institutions of this type, such as existing ESCs and the new ESCs of Argentina and Costa Rica, created during the difficult circumstances of the pandemic.

BOX 5 THEMATIC CLUSTERS OF ESC LITERATURE AND MAIN LINES OF DEBATE

No.	Thematic cluster	Lines of debate
1	Creation factors	i) Exogenous; ii) Endogenous.
2	Conditions of success/failure	i) Institutional design; ii) Capacity of organisation of the civil society; iii) Political will of the government to facilitate participation.
3	Evaluation effectiveness	Predominantly “instrumental effectiveness” in policies and laws, although dispersion in its significance.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

With respect to the first cluster, the review shows that when the origin of the ESC is a product of external incentives, the experience is unsuccessful. Exogenous factors determined the creation of the ESCs of Eastern Europe (Börzel, 2010; Börzel & Buzogány, 2010; Grosse, 2010; Spasova & Tomini, 2013), Turkey (Çelik, 2020; Çiçek & Öçal, 2019), South Korea (Cho, 2019; Han et al., 2010) and South Africa (Kim & Van Der Westhuizen, 2017). These studies, moreover, indicate that the ESCs were promoted as a mechanism to implement orthodox economic reforms and institutions of liberal democracy, in an attempt to foster a model of Anglo-American capitalism on the “tabula rasa” after the collapse of communism or dictatorial regimes, which did not take into account either existing institutions or the prior conditioning factors of these countries. The extension of the liberal economy to peripheral regions in the late twentieth century paradoxically used ESCs, associated with coordinated market economies, a dysfunctional endeavour, as this study has demonstrated.

The exogenous incentives of the EU or the IMF to involve corporate actors in public decisions rapidly disappeared once the ESCs were created, which also evidences the limitations of “exporting” institutions that are at home in other models of capitalism. In these cases, the creation of ESCs was “policy on paper only”, which resulted in “illusory” corporatism and ESCs, not arousing the interest of the government or the social actors, or even of academic research.

Endogenous creation does not necessarily ensure the strength and success of ESCs. However, it can be observed that endogenous factors are more likely to have a positive determining influence than exogenous factors in this respect. The creation of the ESCs of the Netherlands (Cho, 2019), Ireland (Regan, 2010) and Brazil (Patschiki, 2016, and others) due to endogenous factors are examples of these institutions having a more significant and long-lasting impact.

The context of creation of an ESC is not the only thing that affects its likelihood of success or failure, other factors also influence its effectiveness. Most of the analyses emphasise the fundamental importance of political support and the power of the socio-economic partners, especially the unions. A government in need and strong unions are key elements for functional corporate institutions (at least in the medium term). In fact, the weakness of unions in Eastern Europe (Spasova & Tomini, 2013), South Korea (Han et al., 2010), Brazil (Patschiki, 2016) and South Africa (Kim & Van Der Westhuizen, 2017) increased due to the deregulations and liberalisations that competitive corporatism has facilitated, with the active participation of the ESCs in this phenomenon.

However, the way in which the literature has evolved, and its focus with respect to conditioning factors, reveals differences. When speaking of the weakness of ESCs, the articles that conduct an analysis at global level (Guardiancich & Ghellab, 2020; Guardiancich & Molina, 2021), at European level (Molina & Miguélez, 2013; Regan, 2010), and exceptionally South Korea (Kim & Van Der Westhuizen, 2017), assign substantial importance to the international crisis, which created a situation more conducive to government unilateralism and the erosion of union power. This differs, however, when peripheral countries are analysed, where the explanatory weight of the crisis is less.

In most of the studies, the institutional design of ESCs is of little interest, and is not a factor taken into account, or it is considered only partially (Çelik, 2020; Guardiancich & Ghellab, 2020; Guardiancich & Molina, 2021; Santos & Gugliano, 2015). This contrasts with the concern of international bodies that national ESCs have a “good institutional design” (International Labour Organisation, 2021), emulating, for example, the design of the European EESC (Spasova & Tomini, 2013). The result serves as a warning on strategies of international bodies based excessively on rules and regulations.

The literature abandoned certain dimensions of the factors of success of ESCs. Although the studies frequently mention that the ESC is a typical institution of coordinated capitalism (Hall & Soskice, 2001), the relationship of an ESC with the model of capitalism it has been created in is little studied (Hassel, 2009; Patschiki, 2016). Most of the literature analysed focuses on explanations of success/failure in the short or medium term, such as the temporary or circumstantial volition of the government or the influence of unions and employers. Nonetheless, these factors depend to a large extent on constraints and the historical path of the institutional model of capitalism of each country. There is need for a greater problematisation (this is one of the research gaps detected) on how ESCs “imported” from coordinated economies into ex-socialist economies or divergent types of Latin American peripheral capitalism operate (Bizberg, 2014; Bizberg & Théret, 2012). In the best of cases, uncritical implementation leads to the ESC being irrelevant and, in the worst of cases, the intensification of dysfunctionalities and negative complementarities.

Related to the above, few studies have shown interest in a perspective of institutional crystallisation of power coalitions. In ESCs, as in any state institution (Poulantzas, 2007), class conflict also manifests itself. The analysis of Han et al. (2010) emphasises coalitions of this type between the state and employers (with the exclusion of workers) in South Korea, which were formed during the dictatorial stage and were institutionalised in the ESC. In Brazil, employer overrepresentation in the CDES (Patschiki, 2016) has reproduced the traditional weight of the São Paulo industrial sector in economic policies that dates back to the post-Second World War period (Bizberg & Théret, 2012). These analyses make it possible to delve deeper into the “factors of success/failure” beyond the particular conjuncture, focusing on the model of capitalism and the historical power coalitions that sustain or limit the ESC.

The third of the thematic clusters is related to the interest in defining what is understood by effectiveness of an ESC, and what the best way to evaluate it is. With some exceptions, most of the studies reviewed consider effectiveness from an instrumental point of view, its capacity to influence policymaking. In certain cases, this almost exclusive focus is related to concerns about establishing criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of ESCs and demonstrating “achievements” despite the impact of the crisis of 2008 (Guardiancich & Ghellab, 2020; Guardiancich & Molina, 2021). Meanwhile, effectiveness in terms of representation/inclusiveness, and the effectiveness of analysis and agenda are usually neglected. However, this exclusive focus does not contemplate the limits of ESCs, above all in countries that do not have a solid tradition of institutions of extra-market coordination.

Establishing what “instrumental effectiveness” is entails certain complications. The effectiveness of an ESC is expressed indistinctly as “responses”, “results”, “impact”, etc. Evaluation of ESCs has ranged from deliberative potential in the Irish case (Regan, 2010) to their capacity to strengthen democracy in the Brazilian experience (Carneiro & Gambi, 2018). The cases of Eastern Europe and Turkey have been analysed within the framework of the Europeanisation process (Börzel, 2010; Börzel & Buzogány, 2010; Çelik, 2020; Çiçek & Öçal, 2019; Grosse, 2010; Spasova & Tomini, 2013), and their effectiveness is observed from this perspective and in a specific historical period. When the ESCs had complied with European constraints (and failed in the rest of their formal objectives) they ceased to interest the literature. An analysis of the results of the ESCs of South Africa (Kim & Van Der Westhuizen, 2017) and South Korea in relation to the labour market (Han et al., 2010) also gives rise to multiple interpretations of instrumental effectiveness. This diffuse or ambiguous nature of the concept of effectiveness is often the result of the high expectations of the institution, believing that the ESC may solve such different problems as low political participation or job insecurity.

In sum, a future agenda of research on ESCs should strengthen comparisons between endogenous and exogenous creation, scrutinise the relationship of an ESC with the model of capitalism, incorporate power coalitions into the analysis and, finally, examine in greater depth the criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of these institutions.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The review work undertaken has made it possible to evaluate and identify the main scientific contributions to a subject that has received little attention from the academic literature, but which, paradoxically, has been addressed by governments and international bodies. In this respect, not only is this study a contribution to the academic field by providing a synthesis of results, conclusions, and research gaps for future research agendas, but it is also potentially useful for public decision makers, socio-economic organisations and international bodies interested in ESCs.

The first conclusion is that endogenous creation does not necessarily ensure the success of an ESC, but it has been shown, on the contrary, that exogenous pressure has only produced ESCs “on paper”. Second, the study of the “factors of success/failure” of an ESC should pay attention to the conditions for success described by the literature, but also to the type of capitalism (closer to liberalism or strategic coordination), the institutional complementarities of the country and the different power coalitions that sustain the council. Our study shows that the type of capitalism combined with the historical path, resolve and strength of the actors involved in social dialogue (and their power coalitions) are crucial factors in their success.

Third, the study conducted allows us to confirm that evaluation of the degree of success of an ESC should take into consideration the particular characteristics of each country. Analysing the effectiveness of an ESC exclusively in terms of its intervention in the processes of drafting legislation and strategic public policymaking may lead to negative, and often erroneous, results. The institutionalisation of social dialogue is a learning process which, moreover, does not necessarily have to strive to achieve the ideal proposed by the European social model. In this respect, the partial lack of definition of the concept of effectiveness may even be favourable, although the inconvenience of ambiguity remains. Evaluations that focus on the capacity of ESCs to build shared discursive agreements (Ireland and Brazil) or the capacity to provide intangible public goods produce more “humble” results in terms of effectiveness, by the standards of European social democratic and continental capitalist countries, but at the same time more appropriate for the circumstances of the great majority of peripheral countries. In short, there is not an unequivocal role that an ESC needs to fulfil in the development of a country, and in any case this role should allow for a learning process that takes time.

Finally, the study conducted provides academics, experts and social partners with a critical selection of the criteria that may be applied in evaluating and strengthening the effectiveness of ESCs, taking into account the country’s institutional environment (and history). It can be affirmed that the new ESCs created recently by the governments of Argentina and Costa Rica, as they are a product of endogenous creation, have taken a favourable first step. This paper may serve as a useful guide of factors to consider and, above all, to avoid, for these and other projects.

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