

# SUSTAINABILITY IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION "COOPERATIVA DOS BARQUEIROS AUTÔNOMOS DA COSTA DA LAGOA"

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A SUSTENTABILIDADE NA GESTÃO DA COOPERATIVA DE BARQUEIROS AUTÔNOMOS DA COSTA DA LAGOA

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**RESUMO:** A sustentabilidade gestão das da sociedade civil tem adquirido organizações importância frente aos desafios que as mesmas enfrentam no sentido de harmonizar os objetivos sociais, ambientais e econômicos e contribuir para desenvolvimento territorial sustentável. desta pesquisa foi analisar a sustentabilidade na gestão da Cooperativa de Barqueiros Autônomos da Costa da Lagoa - Cooperbarco, localizada ao sul do Brasil, no Município de Florianópolis, Estado de Santa Catarina e compreender seus impactos no desenvolvimento da comunidade local em que atua e no município. Para tanto, foi aplicada a metodologia do Modelo Trevo, sendo analisadas as relações do grupo gestor com as pessoas, sociedade, recursos e os serviços prestados pela cooperativa. O estudo aqui apresentado foi orientado teoricamente pelas categorias de "formação socioespacial" e "desenvolvimento sustentável". Os resultados apresentados nesta pesquisa concluíram que a Cooperbarco apresenta características sustentáveis, sendo exercida por população tradicional de origem acoriana, empoderando a comunidade local, produzindo mobilidade náutica urbana na Comunidade da Costa da Lagoa, contribuindo com o turismo no Município de Florianópolis e promovendo desenvolvimento comunitário.

**Palavras-chave:** Desenvolvimento Sustentável, Mobilidade Urbana, Capital Social, Organizações da Sociedade Civil.

ABSTRACT: The issue of sustainability in the management of civil society organizations has gained importance due to the challenges these institutions face to conciliate social, environmental, and economic objectives while contributing to sustainable territorial development. This research examined the aspect of sustainability in the management of a boatmen's cooperative operating in Florianópolis, Southern Brazil (Cooperativa dos Barqueiros Autônomos da Costa da Lagoa – Cooperbarco). The study aimed to understand the impact of the cooperative's development in the local community of Costa da Lagoa, adopting the technique of the "modelo trevo" (clover model) to analyze the relationships of the cooperative's steering group with people, society, resources, and with the services the organization provides. The theoretical categories of "socio-spatial constitution" and "sustainable development" guided the study. The results revealed that the cooperative's management presents characteristics of sustainability, because it is led by a traditional population with origins in the islands of Azores (Portugal), and due to its role in empowering the local community. In addition, the cooperative operates crucial services of urban mobility through water-based transportation, promotes community development, and has gained an important role in tourism of the city of Florianópolis.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Development, Urban Mobility, Social Capital, Civil Society Organizations.

#### INTRODUCTION

This study analyzes the sustainability in the management of civil society organizations observing the Cooperativa dos Barqueiros Autônomos da Costa da Lagoa (Cooperbarco), a boatmen's cooperative operating in Florianópolis, Southern Brazil.

The research was conducted in a context of mobility debates on urban Florianópolis and neighboring cities. This issue attracted the academic curiosity to understand the role of a civil society organization providing services on this matter to a local traditional community and tourists. The scientific interest in this case considers the Brazilian national policy on urban mobility, which is grounded on principles of universal accessibility and sustainable development of cities, as well as on equality regarding the provision of public transportation to citizens. The study seeks to connect the debates on socio-spatial constitution and sustainability based on these principles, observing the management of a civil society organization operating in urban mobility.

Cooperbarco is managed by residents of Costa da Lagoa, a lakeside neighborhood with limited access (only by boat or on foot), on the island where most of the city of Florianópolis is located. The neighborhood has high social capital, which has contributed to empowering local residents, through cooperation and innovative experiences, to address problems such as urban mobility, community development, and challenges related to sustainability (SERAFIM et. al, 2013).

The research that originated this article adopted a methodology divided into two stages. The first stage was exploratory, conducted to expand the knowledge on the topic through bibliometric review, which is not presented here. The second stage included descriptive, deductive, and explanatory qualitative research. The strategies adopted were literature analysis and case study. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted, collecting information that was used in both stages. The case studied was presented and

discussed based on the technique 'clover model,' supported by the information collected in the interviews and by the literature.

This study demonstrated that establishing a focus was crucial for the organization analyzed. The fact that Cooperbarco concentrated its activities on the connection of the local community with the issue of mobility and the provision of water-based public transportation helped the institution to avoid wasting resources and energy trying to solve all problems surrounding the community, efficiently addressing one of the major community needs. Cooperbarco could use the significant natural resources and the strong social capital of the community to provide quality services, reinforce its commitment to local development, promote tourism and employment, and contribute to urban mobility in the neighborhood of Costa da Lagoa, a role legitimated by the recognition from the local community and the partnership with the municipal government.

The findings of this study suggest the capacity of the community of Costa da Lagoa to work collectively to solve local problems, making use of its strong social capital as mentioned above - social capital that was decisive for the emergence and management of the cooperative. Cooperbarco has a significant role in consolidating a mean of urban transportation that is inclusive participatory while offering quality and social, economic, and environmental sustainability. The experience examined in the case demonstrates that it is possible to incorporate waterbased transportation in the urban mobility system in many cities, not only as a public service in the area of mobility but as a strategy to empower traditional populations and promote community development in areas of limited access.

The findings obtained in this study indicate the need to disseminate a model of territorial development that favors the implementation of a decentralized administrative system, guided by a new relationship between rural and urban areas, valuing micro-regional relationships. This model considers the adoption of a government's politicaladministrative decentralization policy, designed for the formulation and implementation of microregional planning that includes partnerships among organizations of civil society and the public and private sectors.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There is no society out of a spatial context. The notion of space is social per se, and the social and spatial categories are, therefore, indissociable. A socio-spatial category, therefore, is related to the differences in the evolution of societies according to their context and to how societies cope with external forces. The basis for explaining the social-spatial category is production, that is, the human man's work to transform, according to historically determined laws, the space the group is included in (SANTOS, 1977).

Space as a social object has a significant influence on society, on daily human life. A person's home, the workplace, social spaces where people meet, the paths connecting these places, these are all passive elements that frame human activity and guide social practice. Praxis, a fundamental element of human nature, is socioeconomic information and it relies on the conditions established by the space (Santos, 2008).

Space represents society as a whole, i.e., it is a socio-spatial arrangement based on a combination of natural and human elements (CHOLLEY, 1964).

Social-spatial development, from an economic point of view, encourages the circulation of goods and people. From a political point of view, it promotes control and security. As for the cultural point of view, social-spatial development preserves the connections that support creation and reproduction of collective identities (SOUZA, 1997).

Sustainable development is based on the alignment of social, environmental, and economic objectives. Little has changed since the Stockholm Conference in 1972 until the Rio de Janeiro Conference in 1992. Sachs (2009) recommends the

use of eight sustainability criteria: social, cultural, ecological, environmental, territorial, economic, and national and international politics.

Territorial planning is crucial development. It enables the organization of territories, stimulating new networks of local environmental production and protection. Sustainable rural development must promote entrepreneurship, taking into account regional and local competitive advantages. In this sense, a sustainable rural development plan must promote capacity building, innovation, and networking. Capacity building involves technical support through inter-municipalities coordination, with the participation of universities, research centers, and non-governmental organizations. As for innovation in the rural context, it must be promoted by programs that favor the local characteristics. Finally, networking must be about solidarity, counting on knowledge exchange, and connecting capacity building and programs of rural innovation (VEIGA, 2003).

Development is connected to cultural aspects since its practice relies on a project. It cannot be limited to social aspects and their economic base, ignoring the relationships in society and the biosphere's evolution. There is an evolution involving two systems governed by different space and time scales. Sustainability in the time scale of human civilizations depends on their ability to follow the principles of ecological prudence and make good use of nature. Sustainable development must be socially inclusive, environmentally sustainable, and economically maintained over time (VEIGA, 2005).

The development of a society should not be measured solely based on the production of material wealth and other income-related variables. It must include appropriate social opportunities and individual, political, social, and economic freedom (SEN, 2000).

New strategies for the development of productive systems are emerging in the territories. From a historical point of view, they are new forms

of organization of the economic sector, aimed at management. 'Motivation' is characterized by the facing the changes of globalization. These strategies indicate a form of territorial development based on concepts such as quality and specificity. The territory becomes a central space for coordination among actors interested in solving unprecedented productive problems (PECQUEUR, 2009).

The capacity of communities to promote the production of collective goods based relationships of trust and cooperation networks is expressed by social capital. Social capital is crucial in when it comes to constituting informal and formal groups that seek community development and the solution of local conflicts (SERAFIM et. al, 2013).

The challenge of sustainability for civil society organizations can be assessed by using a technique called 'clover model,' which presents five dimensions to guide the analysis of an organization, considering the relationships it establishes: People: information, 1) communication, and internal relations; 2) Society: relations with society, the group who benefits from the activities of the organization; 3) Resources: an analysis on the resources to maintain the activities; 4) Services and processes: determine the means to achieve the organization's purposes, including its management; and 5) Steering group, represented by the organization's leaders. There are significant interactions among these five dimensions, such as direction, capacity, quality, motivation, viability, and legitimacy (ALVESJR., 2010).

'Direction' refers to the relationship between society and the services the organization provides. It is an element that prevents the organization from losing focus when facing the complexity of a community and its challenges. As for 'capacity,' this is an element shaped by the relationship between resources and people, infrastructure, and talent. It refers to the organization's ability to meet the needs of society. 'Quality' refers to the relationship between people and services. The way services are coordinated represents the differential in the institution's commitment to the social cause. It is related to the relationship between people and society. 'Viability' is reflected in the relationship between resources available and the services offered. Finally, the relationship between society and resources reflects the 'legitimacy,' which is confirmed in resources entrusted to the organization (PEREIRA, 2013).

### METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

The methodology adopted was divided into two stages. The first stage consisted of exploratory research to expand the knowledge on the topic, using the technique of bibliometric review, which is not presented here. The second stage consisted of descriptive, deductive, and explanatory research, using literature analysis and case study, described and discussed based on the dimensions of the 'clover model'.

Also, semi-structured interviews were conducted, collecting information that was used in both stages of the research.

Endnote X7.5 software was used for bibliometric analysis conducted on the Compendex, Ebsco, Emerald, Eric, Proquest, Google Scholar, Scielo, Scopus, Web of Knowledge, and Wiley databases.

The semi-structured interviews conducted with the President and the Vice-President of Cooperbarco, on May 19, 2018, October 13, 2018, and May 11, 2019.

Data analysis was based on the descriptive nature of the study. The study describes the context where the cooperative emerged and its history, as well as elements of its governance and services, based on the framework offered by the 'clover model.' The exercise of describing the history of the cooperative highlight variables that condition dynamics related to community territorial development and social innovation (SABOURIN, 2011).

The deductive method was used in this

research as it allows, based on a deep theoretical immersion of the dimensions that supported the data analysis, to prove the relations theoretically analyzed (ECO, 2017).

The use of the case study contributed to understanding the context and focused on the dynamics of the local reality. Therefore, the case study, as a scientific research tool, facilitated the understanding of processes given the social complexity in which they manifested. The technique of case study is useful to help validate models and discuss their potential to generalization, based on the cases limits, boundaries, obstacles, and opportunities (PARKER; NORTHCOTT, 2016).

The explanatory research aimed to clarify the phenomenon studied, explaining why it occurred, i.e., its causes (VERGARA, 2000).

In the explanatory analysis, the content was examined predominantly using content analysis. The content was distributed in categories, seeking to understand the interactions, the dynamics of innovation, the networks, as well as the learning processes identified. The result variables and the inclusion of new approaches allow analyzing a networked social innovation system, concerning its socio-spatial position. This measure helps to estimate impacts, identify the changes generated in the territory and the inclusion of new approaches that contribute to the implementation, evaluation, and monitoring of public policies for social innovation, stimulating sustainable territorial development (BARDIN, 2010).

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The "City Statute" is a mechanism established in Brazilian law to help cities to create urban order. This legislation provides on the right to sustainable city and set the bases for the National Plan for Urban Development, encompassing strategic fields related to sustainable urban mobility, urban development, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion. The National Urban Mobility Policy is grounded on the

principles of universal accessibility and sustainable development of cities; in the socioeconomic and environmental dimensions; and equity in the access of citizens to public transportation. Also, the national policy is based on the efficiency, efficacy, and effectiveness in the provision of transport services, urban circulation, democratic management, social accountability regarding urban planning, evaluation of policy implementation, commuting safety, and fair distribution of benefits from using the public space (BRASIL, 2012).

In the city of Florianópolis, urban mobility is ruled according to the city's master plan and the plan of sustainable urban mobility. The chapters I and II of the master plan provide on the natural areas, quality of mobility connections, and integration of modals. In general, the chapters refer to land-based mobility and fail to mention issues regarding sustainable development issues. The plan of sustainable urban mobility addresses the metropolitan region, and discusses more than the choice for transportation modals, focusing on environmental economic and sustainability. However, the local government has difficulty meeting the demand for sustainable urban mobility, given the level of complexity of the urban space, especially the city of Florianópolis with a large part of its territory on an island and is considered one of the cities with the worst urban mobility index in the country. Thus, solutions coming from civil society organizations such as the contribution Cooperbarco in Costa da Lagoa, may be considered a viable response to the demands the authorities fail to meet, not only in terms of sustainable mobility, but also regarding sustainable development in the broad sense, considering the social, environmental, points economic of view, including strengthening local social capital.

The community in the neighborhood of Costa da Lagoa, through its historical roots, social, economic, and political configurations, as well as its forms of social interaction, contributes to the residents' ability to build bonds of trust and preserve tradition and solidarity networks (SERAFIM et. al, 2013).

The neighborhood is located on the shore of Lagoa da Conceição (a large lake in the Central-East part of the island) and has a history of human occupation that goes back for more than a hundred years. It was colonized in the mid-eighteenth century by immigrants coming from the Portuguese islands of Azores. It currently has approximately 800 residents in the 2931 households scattered in various groups of houses arranged at the base of the hills, next to the lake. It is only accessible on foot, or by boat. The water-based transportation is carried out by boatmen's cooperatives (Cooperbarco and Coopercosta) which have a contract with the local government to operate the transport system in the area on two routes or by renting out private boats. The characteristics of the access to the area have made the community develop differently, with a culture marked by the use of various types of boats as instrument to perform daily activities. This culture evolved into a system of water-based public transportation, but still shows elements of the traditional fishing culture using canoes and larger boats for fishing on the sea. The local economy is divided between the transportation of people, gastronomic tourism, and small-scale fishing. Costa da Lagoa is divided into five smaller communities, Vila Verde, Praia Seca, Baixada, Vila Principal, and Praia do Sul (LUZ, 2014).

The Cooperativa dos organization Barqueiros Autônomos da Costa da Lagoa (Cooperbarco), was established on April 16, 1995, aiming to advocate for its members economic and social interests through mutual help. When looking at the Cooperbarco based on 'clover model,' its 'Steering Group' is at the center seeking to balance relationships between people, society, resources, and services. The group has the responsibility of maintaining the balance between the best result for society and the organization.Cooperbarco's steering group of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and six members of the Fiscal Committee. The President is responsible for directing, supervising, ordering activities, authorizing, calling and chairing meetings,

elaborating and presenting documents, representing the members of the cooperative. The Vice-President has the responsibility of being permanently aware of the Presidents acts, replacing them if they are absent for periods less than ninety days. The Secretary is responsible for following and reporting the meetings and institutional acts, writing the minutes of the Board of Directors' meetings and the General Assembly. The Secretary is responsible for keeping the relevant books, documents, and archives. Among other duties, the Treasurer is responsible for authorizing, together with the President, or another Director designated by the Board of Directors, contracts and other documents constituting obligations, in addition to signing bank checks with the President and following the administration of the cooperative. The Fiscal Committee is composed of three acting and three deputy members. They are elected at the General Meeting, and one third of the members can be reelected. The Fiscal Committee oversees the operations, activities, and services of the cooperati $ve^1$ .

The relationships in the dimension 'People' of the clover model are marked by information, communication. and internal relations. Cooperbarco currently has twenty-eight members. All are them are native residents of Costa da Lagoa. Fifteen of the members are over 60 years old (Brazilian law states that a cooperative must have at least 20 members to be established and run, and there is no maximum number of members). Almost all members are illiterate, retired, and have some relationship. Because characteristics, it is common that a member retires as part of the cooperative and their descendant takes their place. The cooperative is not the only source of income for many of its members. During the winter, some of the boatmen fish and sell mullet, a variety of fish very much appreciated in the region. In this situation, it is sometimes necessary to hire temporary employees. Cooperbarco has seven employees hired on a contract, one responsible for cleaning and six for selling tickets. During the summer season (December, January, and February)

<sup>1</sup> Interviews with the President and Vice-President of the Cooperbarco, carried out on May 19, 2018; October 13, 2018; and May 11, 2019.

Florianópolis has a significant increase in the population. Because of its natural and historical richness, Costa da Lagoa is a neighborhood that manv tourists. The demand transportation in this period consequently increases, requiring temporary hiring of employees. Each boat has one boat master and one crew member who have a license as a deck officer. The Board of Directors Meeting is held monthly, and the General Assembly is held annually. At these meetings, all members have the right to speak up. The meeting starts at the time of the call notice if there are at least two-thirds of the members present. If the minimum number of members is not met at the first call, there is a second call, where at least half of the members plus one person must be present. Finally, if the minimum number of members required in the second call is not met, there is a third call allowing the meeting to take place if there are at least ten members present. To avoid member absence, the cooperative established a fine for those that miss meetings. The voting process is spontaneous, and decision-making is by acclamation, winning the alternative that gets most votes. If there is a tie, the President shall decide<sup>2</sup>.

The dimension 'Society,' adopting the clover model to guide the description of Cooperbarco, is characterized by the offer of public and tourist transportation on the route between the center of Lagoa da Conceição and neighborhood of Costa da Lagoa. The primary target public of the organization is the community of Costa da Lagoa. However, the natural beauty of the region and the historical sites related to the Azorean colonization have promoted visits from tourists and students, who also use the water-based transportation. An important issue in cooperative's activity is its interaction with the government, which can be seen as an innovation strategy toward the sustainable development, involving the partnership between a civil society organization and the state to address a public demand. Some aspects of this relationship are worth stressing, such as the subsidies offered by the local government to reduce transportation costs, and the services the cooperative provides by transporting supplies to the community and partnerships to support educational activities. In addition to empowering the local community, the cooperative's activities stimulate tourism and enable residents to work and study in the metropolitan region of Florianópolis<sup>3</sup>.

As for the dimension of 'Resources,' the relationship of Cooperbarco with the natural resources in the territory stands out. The lake is the very reason for the existence of the type of transportation offered. The fact that the local government considers Costa da Lagoa as a heritage area leads the organization to engage in protecting the environmental resources – the remaining Atlantic Forest – and the local culture and history. In the socioeconomic dimension, a relationship to highlight is the subsidies the cooperative receives from the local government toward the boat tickets to be used by the local community. The operation has a cost of BRL4.40. The fares are divided into four categories: students, residents, service providers, and tourists. Students and residents pay respectively BRL2.20, and BRL3.25 and the city covers the other part of the ticket to complete the total price of BRL4.40 through subsidies. Service providers who use transportation to work in the community pay the full cost of BRL4.40 (as mentioned, this amount is the cooperative operating cost, and does not include the profits for the organization's members). The public transportation system, therefore, is an activity with the exclusive purpose of serving the community. The fare for the tourist has a cost of BRL12.50, which is the source of the cooperative financial return. The amount is divided 65% for the cooperative, to be distributed among members, 20% pays the boatman for the operational expenses, and 15% is used to pay administrative expenses<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Interviews with the President and Vice-President of the Cooperbarco, carried out on May 19, 2018; October 13, 2018; and May 11, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Interviews with the President and Vice-President of the Cooperbarco, carried out on May 19, 2018; October 13, 2018; and May 11, 2019

<sup>4</sup> Interviews with the President and Vice-President of the Cooperbarco, carried out on May 19, 2018; October 13, 2018; and May 11, 2019.

Finally, the dimension 'Services' includes Cooperbarco the water-based transportation. Currently, the cooperative performs 31 routes per day. During the summer there is a 20% increase. The service for the community starts at 5:50 am, leaving Costa da Lagoa, and the last trip is at 11:30 pm, leaving Lagoa da Conceição. Due to the financial subsidy received from the local government – ruled by Decree 18098 of 2017 – the fares are adjusted when there is adjustment in the fares of the city's public transportation system. In the summer, the cooperative offers a route to another neighborhood, Barra da Lagoa. In addition to the routes of water-based public transportation, Cooperbarco performs other services, such as 'Barco Ligeirinho', a fast boat to Costa da Lagoa and to Barra da Lagoa, which works under request of passengers (minimum 17 passengers). The average time of the trip with this service is 15 minutes, versus the 50-minute regular boat trip. The cost of the service varies with the number of passengers and is set directly with the boat owner. The cooperative offers services that are free of charge, such as the transportation of medicine, once a week, to the neighborhood's health center; transportation of food, two to three times a week, to the school; field trips for students of the community school; and freight transportation (grocery shopping and furniture, for example). Information about the services provided, including ticket price, time, among others, is conveyed through posters on the walls of boat stops, as well as on the organization's website. The Cooperative has other means of communication such as telephones and emails<sup>5</sup>.

# FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study demonstrated that 1) The information, communication, and internal relations of Cooperbarco – marked by relations among people – show the existence of trust and cooperation enabling the production of collective goods, driven by a social cause. These elements are crucial to form this type of organization, to address local conflicts, and promote community

development; 2) Cooperbarco's relation with society suggests economic, political, and cultural benefits. The service of water-based transportation - with special prices for students, residents, and service providers – collaborates with urban mobility in the neighborhood of Costa da Lagoa, as as stimulating the tourism economy represented by restaurants and inns. The service has an important role in environmental and cultural preservation, at the same time as strengthening security, valuing the relations of trust within the community; 3) The resources that are essential to maintain the activities of Cooperbarco are present in the region (including the high social capital characteristic of the formation of that community), which guarantee the viability of the organization. It is important to mention that the region is considered a heritage area, and counts on small shipyards where artisan fishermen, produce handmade boats; 4) Services and processes were the determining means to achieve the appreciation of the quality of Cooperbarco, as perceived by residents of Costa da Lagoa, with 25 trips per day, starting at 5:50am and ending at 11:30pm; 5) The steering group formed by the leaders of Cooperbarco and formed based on relationships of trust and solidarity, was able to overcome challenges such as the low level of of the members, education keeping organization's focus on the solution of problems related to urban mobility and transportation. It is noteworthy that the cooperative is able to meet the community needs in terms of transportation, privileging local infrastructure and people talent, which is crucial for the sustainability of the organization's management.

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