

TRAINING AND ORGANIZATION: experience in solidarity economy and cooperativismo

FORMAÇÃO E ORGANIZAÇÃO: experiência em economia solidária e cooperativismo

FORMACIÓN Y ORGANIZACIÓN: experiencia en economía solidaria y cooperativismo

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ABSTRACT:

Training and Organization: experience in solidarity economy and cooperativism is a narrative about the involvement of groups of subjects who are willing to live a collective experience, in a common commercialization space in a solidarity economic enterprise. Taking as a reference the scenario where the social struggles originated, which serves as the basis for the structuring of cooperativism and the solidarity economy movement. We conceive the locus and subjects in their territorial, historical-social and political dimensions. In the search to answer whether, and how, the involvement of producers/consumers in the Solidarity and Sustainable Consumption Cooperative (Cooperssol) constituted a pedagogical practice capable of promoting changes in social practices for the constitution of a culture of solidarity?

KEYWORDS: Solidarity incubation; Cooperativism; Popular education; Social movement.

Introduction

The object of analysis in this article is the formation and organization of the solidarity economy and cooperativism, which have become a social movement and public policy. In this way, we seek to demonstrate the historical processes of constitution of initiatives of economic organization and formation of the working class.

Our research methodology is based on hermeneutics, which deals with the theoretical frameworks of the solidarity economy and solidarity cooperatives. To this procedure is added the analysis of solidarity incubation experiences carried out by the Center for Studies and Praxiologies of the University and the World of Work (Unitrabalho Center) at the State University of Mato Grosso (Unemat). The focus is on the Solidarity and Sustainable Consumption Cooperative (Cooperssol) as a space for pedagogical practices. Through field research, we express the representations and worldviews of cooperative members in relation to attitudes to participation and learning.

As a result, we present contexts and arguments about the epistemological and socio-political bases of the historical construction of the solidarity economy and solidarity cooperativism, as well as showing the experience of Cooperssol as a space for pedagogical praxis of reflection and the social practice of learning social relations of cooperation.

The reflection follows the perspective of understanding the possibilities of solidarity education as a historical-critical epistemology of learning and the organization of solidarity economic enterprises. We seek to answer how the concrete experience of economic and pedagogical organization environmentalizes conceptions and social practices of solidarity and ethical commitments of insertion.

Cooperativism and the methodology of solidarity incubation

In Brazil, cooperativism, understood as a social and economic movement, had its first initiatives in the 19th century, with a few ventures in the state of São Paulo and the southern states, in the form of consumption, agricultural production and credit. It remained unregulated until 1932, when the first basic law on cooperatives in Brazil was registered, Decree No. 22.239/32, which had the Rochdale doctrine as its parameter, and enjoyed a certain freedom of constitution and operation (Melo, 2012, p. 90).

The 1960s is considered by some scholars to be "[...] one of the heyday of cooperativism in the country's history, reaching 4,000 cooperatives throughout the country with a membership of 1,873,150" (Moreira, 2003, p. 204). However, progress was set back with the enactment of Decree 60.597/67, which implemented strong state control over cooperatives and almost completely eliminated tax incentives for them (Melo, 2012, p. 91).

In 1971, Law 5.764/71 was enacted, which defined the National Cooperative Policy and established the legal regime for cooperative societies. The most criticized point of this law is the regulation of the unique representativeness of Brazilian cooperativism, with the foundation of the Organization of Brazilian Cooperatives (OCB), in an attempt to standardize or homogenize national cooperativism. This regulation reaffirms the business nature of cooperative societies and excludes other social organizational practices that do not correspond to this model. Therefore, organizations of popular origin, made up of groups of people who lived and still live on the margins of capitalist society, were left out and without support or representation. In this sense, we can deduce that the National Cooperative Policy was designed to meet the interests

of the owners of capital, to promote the country's economic development and not to overcome the social inequalities generated by the hegemonic capitalist model.

Official and predominant cooperativism is contradictory to the revolutionary, emancipatory process of overcoming inequalities and workers' autonomy and collective ownership of the means of production. Distinct from hegemonic cooperativism, in the context of the emergence of today's history, the solidarity economy movement and the experiences of solidarity cooperativism, led by grassroots groups in urban and rural contexts, who share the material reality of exclusion, unemployment and misery, challenge themselves to produce and reproduce existence with the perspective of good living, in social relations of cooperation and solidarity.

Based on the parameters of solidarity, the main distinguishing feature of solidarity cooperatives is the dissemination of educational actions focused on participatory and self-management (Singer, 2004). One of the fields of application of this thinking is the economic and social development of family farming, strengthening the vision of cooperativism as a tool for local development, based on diversified and sustainable existential foundations.

The organizational model of solidarity cooperatives is articulated and represented by the National Union of Family Farming and Solidarity Economy Cooperatives (Unicafes). The organization is permanently and progressively building strategies to strengthen individual cooperatives and cooperation networks. In order to fertilize the concepts and practices of cooperation, the Solidarity Cooperative Education Program (Pecsol) is carried out, constituting cycles of training and organization with the aim of expanding actions of inclusion, participation and socio-economic and cultural empowerment of the cooperative members.

Solidarity cooperatives base their planning and decision-making on the philosophy of good living, a social thought and practice born and socialized from the experiences of the original peoples of the Abya Yala (Living Land) continent. This philosophy differs from the concept of well-being, of European origin, which associates quality of life with access to consumption of material and cultural goods. To broaden understanding and indicate that the concept of good living goes beyond the concept of well-being, Costa (2015, p. 34) explains:

[...] Wellbeing questions the Eurocentric concept of well-being. It is a proposal for struggle that confronts the colonality of power. Without minimizing the indigenous contribution, we have to accept that the Andean and Amazonian visions are not the only source of inspiration for the Good Life. In various spaces around the world - and even in

circles of Western culture - various voices have been raised for a long time that could be somewhat in tune with this vision, such as ecologists, feminists, cooperativists, Marxists and humanists.

Zart (2023) demonstrates that science articulated with art leads to understanding and redimensions the interpretation of social relations and the educational process that enable subjects to take conscious, liberating action and, consequently, transform the existential, material, social and cultural human condition.

In the field research, when we asked the cooperative members why they became members, we got the following answers:

[...] for the principles of collective solidarity and social cooperation, with prospects for changing the economic model (Edson);

[...] from theory to praxis being a member of Cooperssol makes me better in my day-to-day life, this space makes me understand that utopia is viable, and that it's worth looking for alternatives to living, eating better and being in a group (Cristiane);

To be able to contribute to small farmers (Rita);

Because consumers decide what and how to produce. Organized consumers can stimulate agroecological and organic production of healthy food (João);

Because I agree with the principles of the solidarity economy and cooperativism, and understand that "being part of" is a way of helping to subvert the logic of capital and strengthen spaces for emancipatory social and economic relations (Ilma).

The prospect of change is explicit in the interviewees' statements, and their commitment to transformation is both personal and collective. They affirm the ethical values of collective solidarity, social cooperation, self-organization, agroecology, emancipatory possibilities and a viable utopia.

In the social construction of cooperation, the members care about each other, establish relationships of co-responsibility and the social construction of alternative realities of solidarity experiences. The proposal is to recover the essential elements of original/utopian cooperativism, in which people build a project for social change, together and for themselves.

The reconfiguration of the cooperative movement, in the midst of a crisis caused by neoliberal policies of impoverishment and unemployment, began in the 1990s with the movements and articulations of groups of workers inside bankrupt private capital companies due to competition and the opening up of national markets to predatory

transnational capital. In an attempt not to lose their jobs, in the language of the solidarity economy, workers seized the means of production and articulated themselves in a collective mode of production. From this process emerged the "new cooperativism", a movement whose foundations seek to rescue the Owenist principles of the Rochdale pioneers and more current experiences such as the kibbutzim in Israel and Mondragón in Spain (Moreira, 2003, p. 206).

According to Sardá (2005),

[...] In Brazil, these alternative forms of production have emerged largely on the initiative of workers and form a field whose multiplicity of practices in the most diverse economic sectors has been identified by the term solidarity economy. Due to the short period of their existence, the emergence of these alternative experiences in the economic sphere generally finds other names, depending on the country in which they are pursued and their predominant characteristics. Social economy, popular economy, solidarity economy, labor economy, plural economy, socio-economy, are some of the terms in which the phenomenon is presented (Sardá, 2005, p. 21).

With the experiences of workers, the theory of the solidarity economy or its reinvention was built, based on the thesis that the contradictions of capitalism create opportunities for the development of economic organizations whose logic is opposed to the dominant mode of production (Singer, 2002, p. 112). This movement is diverse and creative and seeks different alternatives to overcome the economic crisis, unemployment and the exclusion of productive groups from the world of work.

In this context, we highlight the fundamental role of two strategic training networks linked to universities: the Technological Incubators of Popular Cooperatives (ITCPs) and the Inter-University Network of Studies and Research on Labor (Unitrabalho Network). With funding from the National Program for Incubators of Popular Cooperatives (Proninc), a public policy that began in 1998, the program began to be implemented regularly and with a greater allocation of resources from 2003 onwards. The main aim of the programme is to support and encourage university incubators to train and organize solidarity economy enterprises (EES), with advice, training and technical assistance. University incubators act as a space for study, research, extension and the development of social technologies aimed at organizing associated work and self-management.

The Incubator for Solidarity and Sustainable Economic Enterprises (INCUBEES), an experience developed at Unemat and linked to the Unitrabalho Network, was made possible through Proninc. In Brazil, the incubators play an educational role in society

with practical and political activities to disseminate solidarity-based socio-economics that boost organization, production and income generation based on people's capacities in their communities, settlements, neighbourhoods and collective groups of belonging.

In Brazil, at the height of Proninc's implementation, 92 universities institutionalized incubators for training activities, essential for the social, economic and educational development of communities marginalized by the hegemonic economic model. In the case of Unemat, INCUBEES plans and implements social technologies (ST) which, according to Bocayuva and Varanda (2009), are strategies for identifying and solving social problems, making it possible to overcome inequalities through the processes of organization experienced in the community, in popular associations and cooperatives, which are increasingly used in the context of work and income generation actions. They are living spaces that bring together professors, researchers, technicians and academics from different areas of knowledge with the aim of developing research, extension and training-organization to strengthen solidarity economy ventures.

It is important to note that, in this scenario, popular extension and social technology are fundamental complementary elements in the educational process that takes place through interaction between universities and social movements, with the aim of developing a model that prioritizes the transformation of social situations.

According to Addor and Franco (2020), social technology is a movement that opposes the dominant idea that technologies are only the work of specialists. ST is a collective construction, articulated between technicians, workers or social movement activists, who act in a dialogical dynamic impregnated by the principles and values of those who practice them on a daily basis. An example of this is the work carried out by Incubeess, which takes place from the perspective of solidarity incubation. This concept was born out of the dialogues and reflections carried out by workers, students and research professors at the Unitrabalho Center. Incubation, adjectivized as solidarity,

[...] breaks with the predominant rationalization of modern sciences. It is the dialogic and learning relationship of diverse knowledge and social practices that represent the universe of languages, symbolologies and technologies that are consistent with and promote the existence of people in their territories and in accordance with their organizations and institutions. In this sense, they affirm cultural identities, promote fundamental rights and social equality, recognize local cultures, articulate exchanges, create new institutionalities, develop appropriate knowledge with social groups. These ethical and political assumptions lead to methodological concepts and actions

that shape solidarity incubation as a process of social production in solidarity (Zart, 2019, p. 160).

Thus, solidarity incubation,

[...] is the political and epistemological responsibility towards social groups on the margins of training, work, income and development possibilities. The methodologies are participatory, the proposals and actions shared. Dialogic learning provokes possibilities that generate answers to economic and ecological problems and issues that shape the existence of social groups (Zart, 2016, p. 06).

In this sense, solidarity incubation takes the form of symbolic educational processes that generate, among the participants, a collective commitment to promoting good living, from a philosophical perspective, as defined by Acosta:

[...] Wellbeing is a philosophy of life that opens the door to the construction of an emancipatory project. A project that, having gathered stories of struggle, resistance and proposals for change, and by drawing on local experiences, to which contributions from different latitudes should be added, positions itself as a starting point for democratically establishing sustainable societies (Acosta, 2015, p. 40).

The proposal to consolidate a commercialization space, aligned with these training processes, is not restricted to the business routine of an ordinary commercial enterprise. The concept is broader, as it sets out to develop a philosophy of life that opens the way to an emancipatory project that is the reflection of historical social struggles that demand a just and democratic society.

Solidarity incubation takes up the principles of popular education in a process that articulates and integrates essential elements for the constitution and consolidation of collective organizations with emancipatory profiles. According to Zart (2017), these elements are the mobilizing action that brings together a shapeless and conflicting collectivity around a common direction, that is, it is the political force moved to unite people; the recognition of the cultural, economic, political, ecological, social, etc. reality of insertion of these people. In order to develop educational actions and the organization of social subjects, training is conceived as an instrument of technical and political qualification to critically interpret reality and the organizational competence of collective processes.

Organization as the managerial process of collective institutional activities, for example, acts as: registration and accounting control, drafting statutes and by-laws,

recording minutes of meetings and assemblies, among other managerial demands. The development of rural enterprises gives them the financial and economic investment capacity to generate work, income and a wide range of products and services for their members and the community. In other words, solidarity incubation is a social technology as a process at the service of popular collective organizations to set up, structure and make viable solidarity economy enterprises.

The solidarity economy: social movement and public policy

Historically, social movements in Brazil gain and lose strength, social needs change and struggles take on new shapes, such as workers, wage earners, illiterate people, the landless, the homeless, rural workers, students, women, indigenous people, quilombolas, black people, waste pickers, LGBTQIA+ people, river dwellers and many others. Due to their exclusion, these groups have organized themselves and started to claim a voice and a place in capitalist society, and are fighting for rights or for their realization, which are constitutionally guaranteed, but still lack regulation for their proper application in society.

Social organizations, considered to have "new contours", make up the category of new social movements. The term "new" is used to differentiate the social movements that emerged from the 1960s onwards, which differed from the traditional social movements that were organized around identity issues; those, in turn, were organized and linked to material issues, with emancipatory contours to question the capacity of the state, to remedy the effects of the market, for example, the social movement for human rights or those related to environmental issues (Cunha, 2003, p. 50).

And in both traditional and new movements, the solidarity economy is gaining strength and receiving influences from various institutions and organizations, such as the Catholic Church, trade unions and left-wing political parties, to name a few, and is therefore taking on the shape of a socialist proposal, since its principles are: self-management, democracy, solidarity, cooperation, respect for nature, fair trade and solidarity consumption. These influences, in one way or another, converge in order to seek a just, free and supportive society, whose social, economic, political and cultural work practices collaborate with and for the well-being of all people,

[...] When we consider collaboration in solidarity as shared work and consumption whose reciprocal bond between people stems, first and foremost, from a moral sense of co-responsibility for the well-being of all and of each person in particular, seeking to expand the concrete exercise of personal and public freedom as much as possible, we

introduce the human exercise of freedom at the heart of this definition [...] (Mance, 1999, p. 178).

However, according to Gohn (1999), social movements are essential productive forces in modern society, not least because they are agents for building a new social order. According to the author, social movements have a marked importance in history, although marked by cycles of high and low expressiveness, without, however, tarnishing their undeniable socio-political strength and the capacity that such movements have to drive significant social change.

We understand the solidarity economy category as a social movement that puts human beings back at the center of economic life, seeking to reconcile the production and circulation of wealth with human emancipation towards a more just and egalitarian society (Barreto, 2003).

The solidarity economy has a multidimensional purpose, i.e. it involves the social, economic, political, ecological and cultural dimensions. This is because, in addition to the economic vision of generating work and income, solidarity economy experiences are projected into the public space, with a view to building a socially just and sustainable environment.

It is essential to emphasize that the solidarity economy is not to be confused with the so-called "third sector", which replaces the state in its legal obligations and inhibits the emancipation of workers from becoming protagonists of rights. The solidarity economy thus reaffirms the emergence of social actors, in other words, the emancipation of workers as historical subjects.

In this way, the solidarity economy is understood as an innovative alternative for generating work and social inclusion, which is consolidated in the form of a network that integrates those who produce, those who sell, exchange and buy, as a practice of good living. The solidarity economy, as a public policy, takes into account the process of articulation of popular movements, in order to enable the Brazilian state to guarantee constitutional rights with little or no effectiveness in the social context.

During the 1990s, a number of organizations emerged with the aim of training and organizing the working class. The National Association of Workers in Self-Managed Enterprises (Anteag) was created in 1994 during the First National Meeting of Workers in Self-Managed Enterprises. It was inspired by the experience of the Makley shoe industry in Franca/SP, which became a self-managed cooperative and prospered significantly; the Solidarity Development Agency of the Central Única dos Trabalhadores (ADS/CUT), created at the end of 1999, which has become an important

hub for the solidarity economy movement to engage directly with the government and trade unions; the Technological Incubators of Popular Cooperatives (ITCPs), which offer training, assistance and consultancy to solidarity enterprises, becoming major units for the study and dissemination of cooperatives and solidarity work groups. These incubators were created in the mid-1990s with the aim of involving people with theoretical and technical references and the knowledge of universities in training, qualifying and advising workers in self-management activities aimed at inclusion and social transformation.

In addition to these, other institutions have been created, such as: the Confederation of Agrarian Reform Cooperatives of Brazil (Concrab), which assists in the planning, organization and marketing of products and services, present in rural settlements; the NGO Caritas do Brasil, a non-governmental entity, of a religious nature, which has incorporated principles of popular entrepreneurship as an alternative form to capitalism, acting in a cooperative way with solidarity movements, acting in the formation of Alternative Community Projects (PACs); the Interuniversity Foundation for Studies and Research on Labor (Unitrabalho), created in 1996, is a network of universities and their researchers focusing on the diversity of the world of work and, in particular, the solidarity economy. In 2003, the National Secretariat for Solidarity Economy (Senaes) was created within the Ministry of Labor and Employment (MTE). The secretariat is the result of a history of mobilization and articulation of the solidarity economy movement in the country, organized in the Brazilian Solidarity Economy Forum (FBES).

In this process, the solidarity economy became a public policy, understood here as a guideline for tackling a public problem, namely the marginalization of workers excluded by capitalism. It is important to understand that the solidarity economy, understood as a public policy, is the result of social struggles and was formed by multiple governmental and non-governmental actors. At the same time, when it became a public policy, it did not cease to be a social movement, because, as Gadotti says, "[...] the solidarity economy, more than a production model, is a way of life" (2009, p. 14).

According to Praxedes (2009),

[...] understanding the solidarity economy as a strategy and policy for solidarity-based development presupposes conceiving it as instruments and tools established as perennial rights for workers and the duty of a republican and democratic state. For the Network of Managers, the solidarity economy is part of the public agenda from

this perspective, meaning the recognition of new social subjects and new citizenship rights, the recognition of new forms of production, reproduction and social distribution, provided with public goods and resources (Praxedes, 2009, pp. 39-40).

It's worth pointing out that public policy in this segment is a reality that is a recent development in Brazil, but it has found support in the states and municipalities and it's worth noting their efforts to pass laws instituting policies to support and encourage the solidarity economy.

The implementation of these actions has resulted in achievements for the SE movement and improved the lives of many people. As an example, the state of Bahia has created a state fund to combat poverty, which has enabled a range of initiatives and support for solidarity-based economic enterprises, such as participation in and access to other programs: the National Social Assistance Fund (FNAS); the National Family Agriculture Program (Pronaf); and the Food Acquisition Program (PAA) (Praxedes, 2009, p. 59).

From the perspective of popular social movements and their pulsating force, it has been possible to build a more inclusive, fair and democratic economic, political and social scenario. Social dynamics based on legal pluralism, a phenomenon resulting from human complexity that arises from the inadequacy of the unitary and centralizing conception of law and the demands of the new complex reality of human conflicts, were also based on the existence of more than one social reality, paying attention to the various forms of practical action and the complexity of social areas with their own characteristics that make up the legal world in which we are immersed.

Thus, we understand that the legal foundation of public policies to promote the solidarity socio-economy, which had been enacted in the country over the last few decades, has gone backwards since the coup against the Dilma Rousseff government. Senaes was abolished on November 4, 2016, after thirteen years of operation. In its place, the Undersecretariat for Solidarity Economy was created within the Labor Secretariat, under the Ministry of Economy. This change represented a reduction in federal public participation and funding in development actions based on the solidarity economy. It didn't take long for this sub-secretariat to cease to exist, after the change of government, with the 2018 elections and the rise of the extreme right in Brazil. The solidarity economy movement continued without federal incentives under Bolsonaro's government, but resisted at state and municipal levels.

With the inauguration of the Lula government in 2023, the National Secretariat for Popular and Solidarity Economy (Senaes) was recreated. We believe that, in public

policy, there is a need to deepen actions to develop solidarity economic ventures, which represent types of economic organizations that originate from the free association of workers, driven by their convictions or excluded from the formal labour market, looking for collective survival alternatives. These enterprises combine economic activities with educational and socio-cultural praxis, valuing the sense of the working community and the commitment to the social collectivity in which they arise, seeking to generate effective material results and extra-economic gains. The virtues of these ventures are not [pre]determined, but constitute tendencies that materialize to a lesser or greater extent according to the objective and subjective conditions in which each experience develops (Gaiger, 2003).

The solidarity economy as an epistemological and educational basis

The solidarity economy, as an epistemological and educational basis, is based on the way in which the social movement is configured throughout the process of struggles, conquests and setbacks experienced by historical subjects. This epistemological basis is embodied in the processuality of an experienced theory and a scientific practice that is reflected on, questioned, dialogued, improved and given new meaning by the subjects involved.

The movement back and forth between theory and practice, practice and theory, refers to the multiple dimensions of this process of pedagogical praxis that is Solidarity Economy. Gadotti (2009), writing "Solidarity Economy as Pedagogical Praxis", states,

[...] classical pedagogies do not take into account the richness of this new economic-political reality that is taking shape today. Teaching self-management is a practical example. How do you teach self-management? Only by example. You can't teach self-management with "self-management lessons", just as you can't teach democracy with "democracy lessons". This is a pedagogy to be built through practice. [...] It's about building values, a culture, together (Gadotti, 2009, p. 36).

In other words, those involved in this process are constituting themselves and collectively consolidating values that support a culture of solidarity, cooperative, political, inclusive, libertarian, sensitive, sustainable, diverse, fair, etc., aligning the dimensions of human life towards this viable utopia.

Its epistemological basis is constituted in the dynamics of the social movement, in which it reproduces human life from the perspective of associated work, self-

management, collective ownership of the means of production, democratic participation, collective decision-making, among other instruments.

Associated work is an extremely important category in solidarity economic ventures, a form of organization that promotes the autonomy of individuals and produces knowledge based on their experiences in working relationships. According to Fischer and Tiriba,

[...] the concept is related to the idea of praxis, popular knowledge, knowledge of experience, tacit knowledge, work as an educational principle, production of knowledge in a work situation, production and legitimization of knowledge of/in work (2009 and p. 186).

For Fischer and Tiriba, they are,

[...] the knowledge produced by workers in work processes that are characterized by the collective appropriation of the means of production, the equal distribution of the fruits of labour and the democratic management of decisions regarding the use of surpluses (leftovers) and the direction of production (Fischer and Tiriba 2009, pp. 293/8).

Associated work is a way of organizing collective work, based on the collective appropriation of the means of production, the equal distribution of the fruits of labour, generating cooperation, solidarity, the ability to deliberate and make decisions collectively, so that it is possible to effectively exercise democracy in the workplace.

We also understand associated work as a political-pedagogical strategy in the field of solidarity economy. Because it is a pedagogy of associated production, aimed at action, research, production, mobilization and the systematization of knowledge, aimed at strengthening work relations, from a perspective of self-management and the creation of a new sociability, based on values and concepts that are different from the dominant logic, we therefore consider associated work,

[...] As a political-pedagogical perspective distinct from capital, the pedagogy of associated production presents itself as a theoretical-practical field that aims to study and implement educational processes whose action and research objectives are the socialization, production, mobilization and systematization of knowledge aimed at strengthening economic activities based on the self-management of work and life in society, contributing to omnilateral human formation [...] (Fischer & Tiriba, 2009, p. 297).

In this sense, there is an interconnection between the processes with a view to transforming individual and collective subjects so that they can act autonomously and consciously in life in society.

Movement is a fundamental part of the formation of the omnilateral human being, comprising the individual's full development, in all its potentialities and senses, because "[...] the developed human being is precisely the one who needs all the manifestations of human life [...]" (Marx; Engels, 1978, p. 238). This formative principle directly implies the process of change and social transformation, because it begins with the subject becoming aware of himself, his role in the world and recognizing and locating himself in his historical time.

In the words of Freire (2005, p. 104), "[...] the existence of men takes place in the world which they incessantly recreate and transform". The world for men and women is a physical and historical space. And this historical and cultural existence of the human being in the world in relation to how we constitute ourselves as beings of praxis through action-reflection, capable of transforming the world and ourselves and, at the same time, socially determined, is part of the collective organization around the world of work that will have repercussions on human production and reproduction.

Thus, from Marx's perspective, ratified by Arroyo (1998), we conceive of work as an educational principle, because

[...] work as an educational principle is situated in a field of concern with the links between productive life and culture, with humanism, with the historical constitution of the human being, their intellectual and collective formation, their emancipation. It is situated in the field of concerns with the universality of human subjects, with the material basis (technique, production, work) of all intellectual and moral activity, of every humanizing process (Arroyo, 1998, p. 152).

In this way, the work-education-work training field requires a challenging articulation between knowledge and action that resizes the rationality of educational processes and work processes, one of whose objectives is to materialize the culture of associated work. This dialectical movement is

[...] the challenge - of linking theory and practice, of articulating the technical with the political, of envisioning a culture of work that doesn't just remain in the clouds, but can gradually materialize on the ground of associated production (Tiriba, 2001, p. 05).

We therefore understand that associated work is constituted in the culture of collective work, which opposes the capitalist mode, but which is formed within this structure of society and that its protagonists are subjects whose existence was and is also forged by capitalist culture, because this model of society has not yet been overcome. And to exist in this context, with the pretension of opposing market models, by acting with other practices and other values such as cooperation, solidarity, democratic management, collective ownership of the means of production, etc. will undoubtedly highlight the contradictions and "limit situations" in everyday relationships. These are challenges to be overcome, and this overcoming takes place in the process of action-reflection-action on day-to-day experiences.

To illustrate our perspective, we draw on Zart's interpretation when he points out that "[...] the interaction of social subjects is also the communication of scientific knowledge and ordinary knowledge, or that which comes from people's everyday experiences related to their social practices" (2019, pp. 158/159).

Constructing productive relations from a humanist and humanizing perspective in a contemporary society whose values are competition, meritocracy, hierarchical relationships and the objectification of subjects requires workers to make a super-effort to become "new men and women", which, according to Freire, "[...] is born from overcoming contradictions by freeing oneself from the conditions: oppressor/oppressed and moves into liberating action" (Freire, 2005, p. 38).

Solidarity education: practice and social pedagogy in non-school spaces

The theme of solidarity education takes us back to the origin of the words "solidarity" and "solidarity", words formed in our own language in the mid-19th century from the adjective "solid", which means something that is solid, firm and consistent. In Mance's words "[...] it means something strong, which is difficult to destroy by an external force" (2000, p. 17).

And it is with this understanding that we discuss solidarity education, in which the meaning of this term is rooted in the solid field of humanizing social relations, in clear opposition to the conservative meaning of the word.

As Zart (2012) ponders,

[...] to conceptualize solidarity in the sense of the social construction of the solidity of human relationships, and therefore of social practices and higher human consciousness. This assertion leads to the opposition of attitudes and conceptions that translate solidarity as a cultural and economic phenomenon that is placed in the political

scenario of reproducing social dependencies. These are practices that are limited to the act of giving something to someone in times of extreme need. Characterized by paternalistic attitudes, they reproduce servitude and social slavery. Solidarity in this sense is a conservative attitude, maintaining the structures of domination and exploitation in both political and economic social relations. Conservative solidarity generates a culture of quietism, silence, hopelessness, waiting and passivity (Zart, 2012, p. 116).

Our attitude in the educational process is against silencing and social servitude and, to this end, we base ourselves on Freire's pedagogy, in which educational training processes involve "people" communicating about the intelligibility of the world, in the complementary cognitive movement of teaching and learning and in permanent interpersonal growth.

Freire is incisive when he says: "[...] to transform the educational experience into pure technical training is to neglect what is fundamentally human in the educational exercise: its formative character" (Freire, 1996, p. 33). While traditional education focuses on technical training, Freire's conception sees the educational process in its entirety and "[...] respects the nature of the human being, the teaching of content cannot take place in isolation from the moral formation of the learner. To educate is substantially to form" (Freire, 1997, p. 37).

For Freire, formative education allows the learner to become the author of their own knowledge, curious about what lies in the cracks of the knowledge presented, and also feeling increasingly instigated by what seems obscure and requires a more creative and creative understanding initiative. For the author, "[...] educational practice is all of these things: affection, joy, scientific ability, technical mastery at the service of change or, regrettably, the permanence of today" (Freire, 1997, p. 161).

Freirean pedagogy is one of the fields of knowledge that enables a critical, liberating and, above all, humanizing educational process. Educating oneself as another demonstrates the ontological vocation for humanization that launches the human being into the permanent and free search to know oneself, knowing the world and acting actively and consciously in it. This is the highest expression of his educational philosophy, also known as the Pedagogy of Humanization.

When we consider the training process in working relationships, especially in the context of solidarity economic enterprises, we are willing to look at alternative ways of working and learning from others in these processes.

Machado states that

[...] one of the purposes of the work-education relationship is to fight for the creation of alternative forms of work, as opposed to the capitalist form of work, and this is not a simple task when you speak and act from within capitalist society or live within that society. On the contrary, this is an extremely complex field, full of contradictions and doubts, and still open to many constructions (Machado, 2010, p. 14).

The implications of this training process, mentioned above, is an everyday challenge, but, says Freitas,

[...] This is a collective challenge, which involves understanding that it is necessary to make our spaces, within the limits of the university structure and the historical conditions we have, a place of work, so that we can make this work the source of the knowledge process (Freitas, 1996, p. 236).

The search for an understanding of what needs to be done in/to our workplaces to make them a place for training, transformation and the propagation of a dialogical, dialectical, critical and reflective culture and conscious practices requires those involved in the process to constantly go back and forth between theory and practice, action and reflection. And this back and forth sharpens our perceptions, our critical eye and reveals the so-called "limit situations". Most of the time, these conditions make growth and humanization unfeasible, because they are circumscribed by limits within which inattention, acceptance and subservience to the authoritarian, alienating and dominant practices of capitalist society operate. These are obstacles that need to be overcome.

According to Freire,

[...] By separating themselves from the world, which they objectify, by separating their activity from themselves, by taking the decision point of their activity from themselves, in their relations with the world and with others, men have overcome the "limit situations", which should not be taken as if they were insurmountable barriers, beyond which nothing existed. At the very moment when people perceive them as a brake, when they become an obstacle to their freedom, they become "detached percepts" in their "vision of the background". They are thus revealed as they really are: concrete and historical dimensions of a given reality (Freire, 2005, p. 104).

This means that being aware of "limit situations" launches subjects into the field of possibilities, "[...] the frontier between being and being more", in the literal sense of what Vieira Pinto (2005) says. In other words, the identification of "limit situations" leads us to the processes of overcoming and liberating ourselves from the conditions that were previously considered annihilating. It's more or less like becoming aware of

what limits you, where it limits you and how it limits you, and from this understanding, we can look for ways to liberate or overcome these limits.

The action of human beings on themselves and on the world creates the domain of culture and history, because only humans are beings of praxis. "Praxis which, being reflection and action that truly transforms reality, is the source of reflective knowledge and creation" (Freire, 2006, p. 106).

From this point of view, the experiences of solidarity economic ventures are the living expression of this critical/liberating process in which these individuals have placed themselves, who, realizing the "limiting situations" imposed by the capitalist society, have set out to make other ways of producing and existing in the world possible.

If we consider Coopersol to be a place of praxis, it is certainly also a fruitful field for exchanging knowledge and articulating educational processes. Especially if we emphasize the pedagogical nature of work, considering its essentiality in the process of constitution of the social being, because, as Machado (2003) teaches us, work

[...] is the founding mechanism of social praxis, containing a subjectivity, and at the same time representing a new objectification of social being, the leap from animality to social being. Which is to say that the genesis of social being is based on work, with the diversity of relationships and interactions that it entails, whether of man with nature or of man with other men. It therefore seems understandable that work occupies a central position in the analysis of the social, political and economic practices of modern and contemporary societies (Machado, 2003, p. 101).

In this sense, work as a free and spontaneous practice takes on a positive and, consequently, meaningful perspective for people within the socio-economy of solidarity movement who experience it

[...] the labor process, as we present it in its simple and abstract elements, is activity oriented towards an end to produce use values, appropriation of the natural to satisfy human needs, universal condition of the metabolism between man and nature, eternal natural condition of human life [...] (Marx, 1983, p. 153).

In other words, work, as an activity carried out to produce use value, is meaningful, pedagogical and emancipatory; it is a creative and educational process of constructing and reconstructing material existence. So, during the fieldwork we asked the research subjects what work was for them, and we got the following answers:

It's a set of activities that we do in order to achieve something (Alcilene);

Work is the action we take on a daily basis, individually or collectively, to achieve our goals and needs, even if we don't pay for it (Eliane);

It's any action carried out with the aim of promoting human existence (Neuzo);

Work is part of our lives, it occupies our minds, our thoughts, it provides comfort for our family to meet our needs, it pays our bills (Jandira).

The answers given by the research subjects, with different profiles, whether due to their age or their cultural, territorial and working reality, demonstrate their awareness of what work is for them, in the sense that Marx gives to the category of work in non-capitalist society. In other words, the answers given by the research subjects strongly demonstrate the value of work in its emancipatory, non-alienated existential dimension. They reveal the perception of people who experience educational processes in counter-hegemonic social movements.

The speeches above represent three different generations of producers: young people, adults and the elderly, each bringing with them the experience of their journey and referring to the existential nature of work. It's possible that most of them have never heard of Marx, but in all the statements we identified the Marxist concept of the category of work. Thus, we find in the subjects' answers the intrinsic relationship between empirical knowledge and conceptual scientific knowledge of the category of work. For men and women, work is an action that marks their existence in the history of society.

We can say that answers like these: "it's every action carried out with the aim of promoting human existence" and "work is the action we carry out on a daily basis individually or collectively to achieve our goals and needs, even if we don't pay for it" contemplate all forms of human work, while at the same time implicitly highlighting the value of the work of historical men and women, providing for their existence in the world.

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By way of conclusion: Cooperssol as a space for pedagogical practices

It is therefore important to emphasize that Cooperssol is a space created in a context of training and university extension, or rather popular extension that is materially substantiated in a non-formal space, with an educational nature because it is a place where educational processes and pedagogical practices are experienced.

At this point, a brief reflection on the terms "university extension" and "popular extension" is in order, highlighting our choice to use the second term in our reflection. "University extension" is understood as an educational, cultural and scientific process that links teaching and research in an inseparable way and enables a transformative relationship between university and society. And the expression "popular extension" proposes overcoming this model and educational values, and is seen as "[...] social work, that is, deliberate action that is constituted from reality and on this objective reality, producing knowledge aimed at social transformation" (Forum of Pro-Rectors apud Neto, 2014, p. 41).

According to Melo Neto (2019),

The construction of this theoretical-practical perspective requires a characterization, however tenuous, of the type of society you want to overcome and its dominant policies. In this way, there is an urgent need to take a critical look at what is being experienced and thus

open up the possibility of actions from the collective perspective of overcoming it, based on a better understanding of the world we live in (Melo Neto, 2019, p. 36).

Understanding the world we live in is fundamental and essential to understanding, among other things, that academic training without the social practice of work is a process of alienation of the subjects, future workers, who will exercise their professions without knowing their social reality and without implication with the community to which they belong.

With this in mind, we can say that the Unitrabalho Center has fostered the interactive process of work and education between academia and society through its extension projects. With this, it promotes critical thinking on the part of the subjects involved, in relation to reality and their social practices.

Work, from an educational perspective, plays a central role in this process because it has the ability to link teaching and research to reality, while at the same time promoting reflection on the academic practices of teachers and students in order to achieve critical, non-alienated teaching that is committed to society. Cooperssol is an example of this educational process that unites academia and society around a common goal to rethink the collective existence of the social model of competition in which we live.

The experience with Cooperssol, a marketing space organized from a different perspective to the capitalist market, has sought to foster interaction between producers and consumers so that together they can experience and exchange knowledge that promotes and improves responsible and sustainable production practices and consumption as a critical political act that is aware of its educational and cultural interconnections.

In this sense, we have observed that formative dialogues on the themes of agroecology, agroforestry, sustainable production, food security, creole seeds, organic produce, etc. have gone beyond the limits of talk/debate and extended to the daily practices of the subjects involved.

In the Cooperssol space, we have observed that producers and consumers have shown, through cooperation experiences and socio-cognitive interaction, a familiarity with and understanding of the themes of solidarity economy organization. The learning environment brings us back to two important elements: the first relates to the subjects' formative and educational process; the second relates to the cultural aspect of work.

For Marx (1983) it is

[...] the labor process, as we present it in its simple and abstract elements, is activity oriented towards an end to produce use values, appropriation of the natural to satisfy human needs, universal condition of the metabolism between man and nature, eternal natural condition of human life [...] (Marx, 1983, p. 153).

The people involved in the cooperation experience have sought to build relationships and interactions for social transformation, which are possible and viable in the space of critical and creative sociability. In this way, the pedagogical practices, considered complex social practices, which in the school space require planning, method and systematization, in the Cooperssol space adopt the dynamics of social movements, from the perspective of solidarity education. And what does this mean? In this analysis, we can say that the process of interaction and dialog between the subjects, when they reflect on their spaces and local, everyday reality, they present demands, which are transformed into generating themes and, based on these, concrete actions are thought out and articulated. These actions have plans and methods aligned with the know-how of the people involved, who produce and socialize new knowledge in their spaces.

In this experience, relationships are developed horizontally and between the diversity of knowledge of teachers, producers, consumers, students and professionals from different training areas, because in the process of training and organizing the solidarity economy and solidarity cooperatives, everyone is a learner and a teacher.

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RESUMO:

Formação e Organização: experiência em economia solidária e cooperativismo é uma reflexão sobre o envolvimento de grupos constituídos de sujeitos que se dispõem a vivenciar uma experiência coletiva, em um espaço comum de comercialização em um empreendimento econômico solidário. Esses sujeitos têm como referência o cenário onde se originaram as lutas sociais, que serve de base para a estruturação do cooperativismo e para o movimento da economia solidária. Nesse sentido, tomamos o *lôcus* e os sujeitos em suas dimensões territorial, histórico-social e política, na busca por responder se, e de que modo, o envolvimento dos produtores/consumidores na Cooperativa de Consumo Solidário e Sustentável (Cooperssol) se constituiu em prática pedagógica capaz de promover mudanças das práticas sociais para a constituição da cultura da solidariedade?

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Incubação solidária; Cooperativismo; Educação popular; Movimento social.

referencia el escenario donde se originaron las luchas sociales, el cual sirve de base para la estructuración del cooperativismo y el movimiento de economía solidaria. Concebimos el locus y los sujetos en sus dimensiones territoriales, histórico-sociales y políticas. ¿En la búsqueda de responder si, y cómo, la participación de productores/consumidores en la Cooperativa de Consumo Solidario y Sostenible (Cooperssol) constituyó una práctica pedagógica capaz de promover cambios en las prácticas sociales para la constitución de una cultura de solidaridad?

PALABRAS CLAVE: Incubación solidaria; Cooperativismo; Educación popular; Movimiento social.

RESUMEM:

Formación y Organización: experiencia en economía solidaria y cooperativismo es una narrativa sobre la involucración de grupos de sujetos que están dispuestos a vivir una experiencia colectiva, en un espacio común de comercialización en una empresa económica solidaria. Tomando como