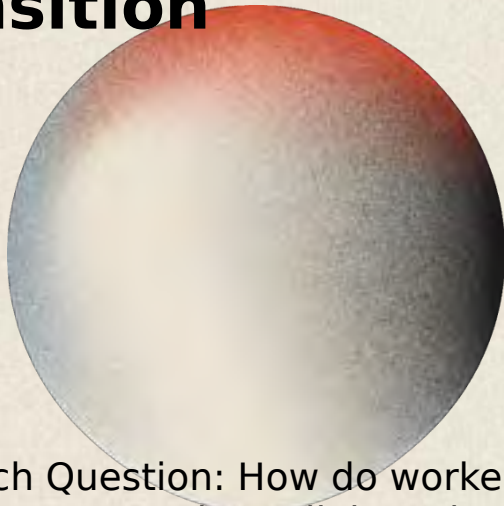


Building political cohesion in worker co-operative & social solidarity organisations:

a study on approaches to ecology in
Catalunya

SEAN FARMELO / BIRMINGHAM CITY UNIVERSITY

Agency in the Eco-social transition




Research Question: How do worker cooperatives form strategies collaboratively in order to address the combined challenges of degrowth and the need to produce value?

Key terms: Degrowth, ESS, Worker control




Cooperatives de Treball (l'FCTC)



Case study

Worker control important element of degrowth policy suggestions. Theory development primary location in Catalunya means l'FCTC key candidate for understanding self directed strategy development.



Standing in interrelation

l'FCTC composed of 655 workers cooperatives. It forms part of a complex ecosystem of organisations which enable the cooperative movement to develop strategies. The vast majority of coops are expanding or recently founded. Secondary networks and incubators supporting development.



Journey towards addressing social issues

Participants explained that members of the federation have campaigned internally for a move from a focus on legislation and services with rigid structure to be more open since the 2011 movement of the squares and rise of new cooperativism in the region.

Data Collection

Study parameters

- The study focuses on worker cooperatives who are actively interested and engaged in planning processes around degrowth and eco-social transition
- I'FCTC chosen for breadth of interview subjects, but additional interviews outside Catalunya carried out for instance in the bicycle industry

Duration and scope

- Four visits, total of half a year
- Limitations around coops spare time and language mitigated by returning in quiet period of the year and provision of translation
- Interviews of around one hour and reflections written where interviews weren't appropriate or of events.

Cooperatives and industries

- Worker cooperatives in green industries
- Snowball sampling, interviewees making recommendation of key actors, coops and networks
- Multistakeholder cooperatives with significant worker control
- Geographical spread across region

Levels and access

- Shared goals with cooperatives around research questions
- Access made possible through my position as a participant of cooperative networks and a worker cooperative in the U.K
- Interviews with members of key cooperatives in ecosystem development

Cooperative Interviews and reflections in Catalunya

MARESME

- **Som Mobilitat:** Car hire consumers coop - 11 workers, 4,000 members

VALLÈS OCCIDENTAL

- **La Sarria:** Bicycle logistics coop - 3 workers,
- **L'Eixida:** Accountancy coop - 11 workers
- **Ciclica:** Architecture coop - 11 workers
- **Clau Mestre:** Housing coop - 11 families

BARCELONA

- **Femprocommons:** Tech and design coop - 8 workers
- **Biciclot:** Bicycle coop - 6 workers
- **Lacol:** Architecture coop - 21 workers, 13 members
- **Ciutat Invisible:** Bookshop coop - 9 workers
- **Cooperatives Catalunya:** Federation - 3063 member organisations
- **CGT Ecosocial Transition Group:** Union - 85,000 members in Spain
- **La Taula:** Design coop - 4 workers
- **Raons:** Architecture coop - 10 workers
- **Bitlab:** Audio production coop - 9 workers
- **Cantina LAB:** Coop bar - 4 workers
- **La Deskomunal:** Events and bar coop - 9 workers
- **Quesoni:** Theatre and audio coop - 11 workers
- **Looky Productions:** video production coop - 4 workers
- **Facto:** Accountancy coop - 35 workers
- **Bar Raiz:** Bar, podcast and events coop - 4 workers, 14 members
- **Coopolis:** Ateneu and coop hub - 10 workers
- **Sostre Cívic:** Housing developer - 21 workers, 1,400 members
- **Grup Ecos:** Network coop - 17 members, 100 workers
- **Can Battlo:** Social centre - 370 members
- **Apostroph':** Communications coop - 12 workers
- **Futurs Implosible:** Forum of XES 133 signatory organisations
- **La Borda:** Housing cooperative - 50 residents
- **La Base:** Social centre - 165 members

TARRAGONA

- **La Escamot:** Bicycle coop - 4 workers

What is the Social and Solidarity Economy?

- 
- Click icon to add picture

- Experienced expansion due to work of social movements related to the indignados movements in early 2010's

- Pamapam.org map 1,300 georeferenced initiatives spread across 15 economic activity sectors.

- Obligatory accounting process 'Social Balanc' which assesses XES organisations on metrics including; internal hierarchy, social transformation, personal development, feminist perspectives.

- Concept developed by coops, third sector and also supported by the state.

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Coopsetània: Alt Penedès i Garraf

coopsetania.cat

Assua, SCCL
C. Sant Ramon de Penyafort, 8
08720 Vilalba dels Penedès

2

Alt Pirineu i Aran

apapa.cat

Consell Comarcal del Pallars Jussà
C. Saldevila, 18
25620 Tremp

3

Baix Llobregat

ateneucoop.elbaixllobregat.cat

Consell Comarcal del Baix Llobregat
CN 340, Parc Torrellblanca, s/n
08980 Sant Feliu de Llobregat

4

Barcelonès Nord

ateneubnord.cat

Grammipuls - Centre d'Empreses Can Peixauet
Av. Generalitat, 99-101
08923 Santa Coloma de Gramenet

5

Catalunya Central

coopcatcentral.cat

Pa au Firal
C. Castelladral, 5-7
08670 Manresa

6

CoopCamp-Tarragona

coopcamp.cat

L'Economat, SCCL
C. Abat Lloret, 22, baixos
43800 Valls

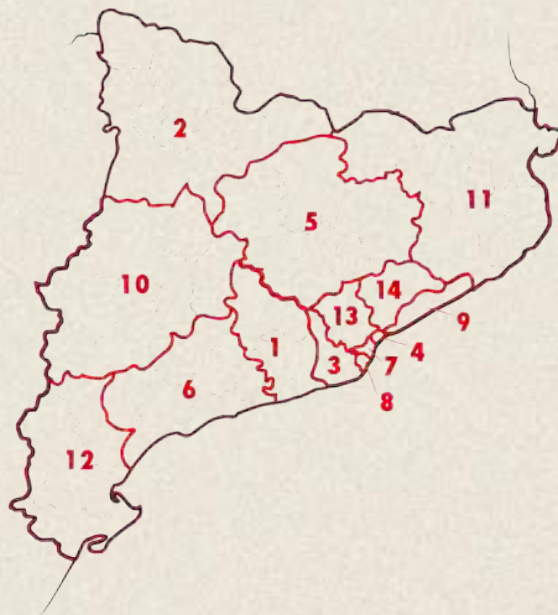
7

Coòpolis Barcelona

bcn.coop

Can Barilo
C. Constitució, 19, bloc B, nau 541
08014 Barcelona

THE COOPERATIVE ATENEUS IN CATALUNYA



8

La Col·lectiva - L'Hospitalet

ateneuuh.coop

Gornal Activa
C. Can Trias, 20
08902 L'Hospitalet de Llobregat

9

Maresme

coopmaresme.cat

Calè de Mar
C. Santa Rita, 1
08302 Mataró

10

Ponent Coopera-Lleida

ponentcoopera.cat

Cal Trepat
Av. Josep Trepat, s/n
25300 Tàrraga

11

Terres gironines

ateneucoopgi.org

Av. de França, 271
17840 Sarrià de Ter

12

Terres de l'Ebre

ateneucoapte.org

C. Barcelona, 73, local
43870 Amposta

13

Vallès Occidental

ateneucooperatiuvalles.org

Promoció Econòmica de Sabadell, S.L.
Ctra. de Barcelona, 208, bis 08205
Sabadell

14

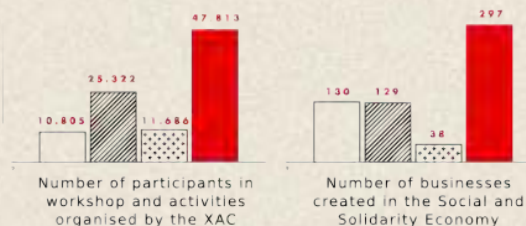
Vallès Oriental

ateneucoopvor.org

Can Muntanyola
Cami del Mig, 22
08401 Granollers

THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE NETWORK OF COOPERATIVE ATENEUS

- 1a edició 2016-2017
- 2a edició 2017-2018
- 3a edició 2018-2019
(Acumulat fins a maig de 2019)
- Acumulat de les 3 edicions
2016-2019



The Ateneus Network is supported financially by the Ministry for Work and Social Economy.

Cooperative organisations



Confederació
de Cooperatives de
Catalunya

**Catalan
confederation
of coops**






**Catalan
worker coop
federation**



**Individual
worker
cooperatives**



Xarxa 
de Pols 
Cooperatius 

**Network of
secondary
cooperatives**



Social and Solidarity Economy



XARXA
D'ECONOMIA
SOLIDÀRIA

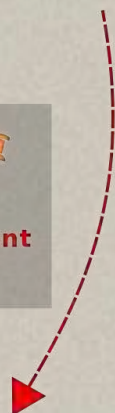
**Solidarity
Economy
Network**



PAMAPAM 



**Movement
tools**



**FUTURS
IMPOSSIBLES**

**Ecosocial
Transition
forum**

State infrastructure



**economia
social
ateneus
cooperatius**

**Funded
cooperative
development
hub network**



COÒPOLIS
Ateneu Cooperatiu de Barcelona

**Barcelona
development
hub and
Ateneu**



Interviews made clear complex
web of relations between federa-
tions and networks

Results

Coding

- Interviews transcribed and translated
- Interviews are being analysed using FOSS qualitative data programme QualCoder.
- Theme codebook created to interpret data in relation to research questions

Themes

- Interview data, associated documentation and the codebook of themes will be used to build a narrative in response to my research questions. Initial findings show
- Worker cooperatives are key component of practical development of degrowth initiatives in the region.
- Development primarily happens in cooperative ecosystems. This is how scale is achieved. Partially contingent on supportive legislative environment.

Extension

- The study focuses on worker cooperatives who are actively interested and engaged in planning processes around degrowth and eco-social transition. Final interviews could delve more into how having this core driving cooperative strategy affects other actors.
- Role of certain ecological consultancy cooperatives and XES staff could be explored.
- Placement of Catalan developments in international context such as GKN workers more neutral approaches like SDG's.

Next steps

Beyond research how can cooperatives be part of the eco-social transition?



Them

Futurs Imposible

- With XES the forum is hosting regular regional visioning sessions in smaller towns and rural areas across the region.
- The forum spurred the formation of Catalan assembly for eco-social transition as ongoing nexus of strategy
- CGT Union creating report on necessary steps to transform all sectors of economy.



Us

workers.coop

- U.K federation of workers cooperatives recommend to develop shared ecological approach, and supporting ecosystems.
- Concept of ESS being dominated by Social Enterprise means lack of distinction between systemic approach and standard corporate responses.