
COOPERATIVE EVOLVEMENT THROUGH POLITICAL ERA / EPOCH: ALBANIAN'S CASE AND COMPARISONS

Olta Sokoli¹, Reiner Doluschitz²

**Corresponding author E-mail: olta.sokoli@uni-hohenheim.de*

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to analyse the structure and state of cooperatives in Albania as a country with a unique history, a post communism country on the development of cooperatives. It is important to understand the way cooperatives are perceived at higher levels. Information strongly influences the development of trust among farmers. Access to information and trust play an important role in the emerging stages of cooperatives. However, the development of cooperatives still remains a very delicate issue in Albania due to misleading of trust issues from the communism era. Cooperatives should not be a 'forbidden' word in the Albanian vocabulary but instead should be considered as a normal and trusted topic at the governmental and organizational levels.

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Introduction

The principles of cooperatives are essential guidelines in determining how a cooperative is initiated and established in developing countries. Due to the non-function in the proper way of cooperatives before 1990, it is likely that not everybody understands the original concept of a cooperative, although everybody talks about them. For instance, in the case of Albania, the first thing that comes to every farmer's mind when mentioning the word "cooperative" is related to the transformation and collectivisation of private land ownership, which is a consequence of the collectivization process that began in 1945. At that time, the state began the transformation of private land ownership, a process in which land originally owned by a large number of farmers was acquired by the state through agrarian reform. Land ownership was transformed from private to collective at that time. This process was a forced changing of the land ownership. Albanian agricultural cooperatives dominated from 1959 until the beginning of 1990. Cooperatives in Albania differed from those in Eastern Europe in their large extent through mountainous areas, plains and in hills (Skreli, 2006). Compared to the main

1 M.Sc. Olta Sokoli (PhD student); Institute of Farm Management, University of Hohenheim, 70599 Stuttgart, Germany, e-mail: Olta.Sokoli@uni-hohenheim.de, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0416-948X>

2 Reiner Doluschitz Prof. Dr.; Head of Institute of Farm Management, University of Hohenheim, 70599 Stuttgart, Germany, e-mail: Reiner.Doluschitz@uni-hohenheim.de

principles of cooperatives such as; one person one vote, democracy, solidarity, self-help, voluntary, self-responsibility, self-administration, etc., in Albania the state had command and an unfavourable role in the cooperative relationship. Cooperative chairmen were chosen by the state and the number of organizational units and the output would be delivered to state; the distribution of income and the provision of a business day were also decided by the state.

The increase in the size of the cooperative was accompanied by a concentration of products deemed “key and strategic”. In this way, other activities such as food processing or infrastructure were neglected. By 2012, most farmers preferred to be registered as a nonprofit organization to avoid taxes and gain market access easily (Data from the Association from Cooperation and Mutual Societies - *Te dhene per Shoqata dhe Shoqeri te Bashkepunimit Reciprok*, 2012)

Material and Methods

Based on the information gathered and analysed, a brief description of the current situation in Albania regarding the offer/supply market of agricultural products will be given. The paper also describes ways to have a consolidated market based on cooperative circumstances. The main objective of the paper is to identify the problems that challenge the partnership between farmers and to determine the potential for the organization of cooperatives in Albania.

Hence, the following research questions were addressed:

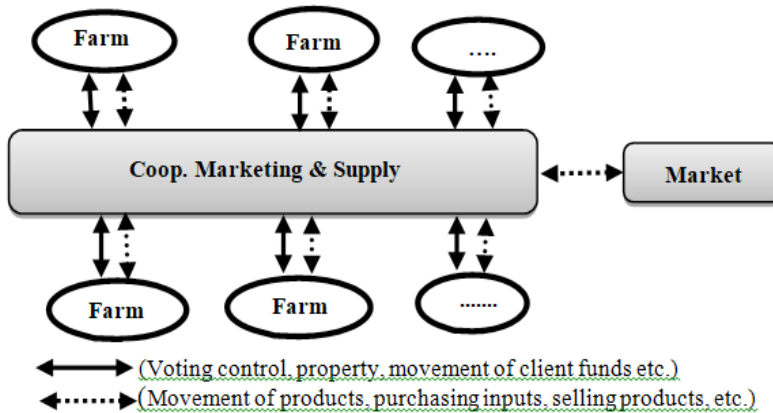
- What are the common items and differences of cooperatives in developed and developing countries?
- Which are key success versus critical factors for cooperatives effectiveness in developing countries?

Our goal is to assess if individuals and/or agribusiness managers have information about the way cooperatives function in Albania, as compared to other Balkan countries and Europe, in order to explain the role of supply and marketing cooperatives (as a bridge between farmers and markets). Cooperatives assist farmers in gaining market access and power.

Subsequently the hypothesis for this paper will be:

- **H1:** Cooperatives are a linkage of farmers’ power with the market

Cooperatives aim to prevent that the strength of their negotiating position decreases in favour of concentrated retailers. Nevertheless, they face challenges adopting the same policy as other corporations because financial funds are primarily acquired by retained earnings. The example shown in Figure 1 is one of the good illustrations of the positive impact that a marketing and supply cooperative can have on every farmer. This illustration makes it clear that cooperative stands are the main linkage with the market as we revealed previously (market access and power).

Figure 1. The role of Marketing and Supply Cooperative

Source: Musabelliu B., Meco M., 2013

- **H2:** Trust in cooperative sector is a sensitive issue in post communism countries

In post communisms countries, the lack of trust is related to the property and common assets management, which seems to be an important factor that has hampered cooperation and creation of cooperative. Sometimes it is important to come back to basics to understand the principle. With time, we will need to change the way things are done to move forward (Parnell, 1999). Parnell (1999) emphasized that a vision statement is important for change; it becomes the focus of the power and activities. It is vital to set the mechanisms that will drive the cooperative organization towards this redesigned future, to make a plan and to have specific work groups.

One major question about providing assistance to cooperatives is how it could be done without creating dependence. The most useful form of assistance may well be the development of local cooperative leaders. Therefore, many so-called cooperatives in Albania have been nothing more than organs of the state or projects driven by state agents; the vital elements of self-help and commitment from the members were never part of the scheme.

Methodology

One purpose of this paper is to analyse the differences of cooperatives evolution in different countries and the second one is to analyse the collaborations of governmental institution to promote and to encourage cooperatives. Therefore, we have considered the countries who promote and encourage cooperatives. To examine and respond to the above objectives, a comprehensive literature review has been done. Thus, this paper includes secondary data collection and analysis.

The secondary data were obtained from various publications accessible through web of science and google scholar, other sources available online and from magazines and publications from governmental websites in Albania.

The search included the following terms: developing countries, cooperative law and governmental support, communism countries, agricultural and property reforms.

In this way, analysis of the literature used a summative content analysis method to understand if the government or any other institution promotes cooperatives as a vehicle for agricultural market improvement. To highlight the adaptability of this method Rapport (2010) has applied summative content analysis across a variety of research studies, on different focus groups. In our case, we had an interactive focus group with experts from the field and policy level.

From this assessment, in the further steps to come, we will use the more appropriate European or Balkan cooperative as an example to adapt to the situation in Albania.

Results

Comparative analysis according to different regions

For many years, there have been different approaches to promoting cooperatives as a way of improving agribusiness and farming systems. The last large-scale promotion of cooperatives took place in 2012, named the Year of Cooperatives by the International Cooperative Association. There have been many conferences and much exchange of knowledge between researchers from various cultural backgrounds. It is essential to point out that different countries perceive cooperatives in different ways. The literature describes several types of cooperatives. A comparison between eastern and western countries will lead to a more specific analysis within eastern countries.

Eastern versus Western Europe: In countries of Eastern Europe the principles of cooperation has gone through a rough history of recognition and even enthusiastic promotion due to the experience of State control of cooperatives (Valentinov V., 2007). In a report done from M-F. Couture, D. Faber, M. Levin, A-B. Nippierd, for the International Labour Office (ILO) in 2002 was analysed the transition of cooperatives in several developing countries. In Eastern Europe, state controlled meant compulsory registration in cooperatives, the directors and staff were prearranged by the government which is in a paradox with one of the six main principles of cooperative (Couture et al., 2002:2).

Cooperative organisation include the creation of a new interface between highly sophisticated and globalized food industries and the primary farms that are seeking sustainable methods in a sustainable rural economy (Gert Van Dijk, 1997). Unlike countries in Eastern Europe, farmers need to establish the cooperative as a form of simply access to bank products. It appears that cooperative banks are the only way farmers can gain access to financial markets. Cooperative banking can contribute to farm adjustment by offering new services and by assisting the members to develop strategies and manage them.

Meanwhile, a new demand from the perspective of the consumer will lead to a need to diversify the product. This affects not only processing but also production methods at the level of the farm. At this point, it is important to point out the role of technology. Access to and implementation of new technology is an irreversible option for cooperatives if they want to penetrate the food chain (Kyriakopoulos, 1996).

In the past, risk management had to do with member solidarity, especially in terms of how surpluses are handled. There is little doubt that the changing conditions within food and agricultural markets have changed the risk profiles for cooperatives and their members. As food markets become more mature, branding and market segmentation plays a vital role. At the same time, integration is a means to reduce risks for farmers as trade liberalization decreases the effect of income protection policies by the government. Again, based on the Van Dijk and Mackel from 1994, cooperatives accepted all products delivered to them by maximizing the use of public support measures to minimize commercial risk, free-trade and optimize price transparency for producers.

There is a wide gap in the information on cooperatives in developing countries, especially Balkan countries and those in Eastern Europe. Sometimes it is not just a missing information but also the information which might be provided is not in English.

Slovenia: Cooperatives in Slovenia, like many other cooperatives in Balkan and Eastern European countries, have a long history with many ups and downs, due to changes in socioeconomic systems and the changing political demarcation of the territory during the last century and a half. The historical development of cooperatives on the territory of what is now Slovenia could be divided as follows:

The first period starts in the middle of the 19th century, when credit cooperatives and later others emerged. The second period began in 1918 with the emergence of the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, which was united and became the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in the same year. Later on in 1929 it was renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. This period lasted until the end of the Second World War. The early years of this period saw the consolidation of the cooperative movement with the newly established cooperative banks. A study by Avsec and Stromajer (2015) cited from Temeljni, (1949) discussed the political campaigns for setting up what were called agricultural working cooperatives (1948–1953); these cooperatives were dissolved and the land and other assets were returned to farmers. Thus, the major part of agricultural land and forests remained in private ownership. However, the administrative pressure brought a long-lasting, negative image of cooperatives among the rural population (Miokovic, V. B., and Sljukic, S., 2012).

Yugoslavian countries: The history of these countries is similar when it comes to politics and may be the main reason for the differences in several aspects as compared Europe. Boyd (1987) emphasis that socialist cooperatives are not inherently inefficient and can perform better than private producers. Most importantly, his results have shown that cooperatives are not inherently incapable of taking advantage of opportunities and generating high productivity and rates of technological change. Based on a study

of Yugoslavian countries, we can conclude that from 1955 to 1990, the number of cooperatives decreased drastically in Yugoslavia (Avsec, F., and Stromajer, J., 2015). *Albania*: The situation in Albania is taking virtually the same route as the Yugoslavian countries. During the first period from 1950 until 1990, there has been a malfunction of cooperatives in Albania. The image of cooperation has deteriorated during this period (Musabelliu, 2009). It is important to note that Albania comes from a post-communism governmental system where everything is derived from and decided by the government. The second period began in 1990 and is ongoing today. There are several countries which have been involved in this “whirlpool”.

As it is shown on the table 1, in difference from Albania, Czech Republic and Hungary the case of Poland and Bulgaria are the good examples of a successful transition. In countries like Bulgaria where land distribution had been rather egalitarian due to former land reforms these criteria were more or less compatible. Restitution of land improved both historical justice and social equity. However in countries with unequal distribution of land property before the socialist era, such as Albania, historical justice and social equity proved to be mutually exclusive leading to land distribution on an equal per capita basis (Hagedorn, 2014). This was due to the different policy that Poland had on public property. Which means that a large portion of private property was not returned to public ownership.

Table 1: Different cases, different countries

Albania	Hungary	Czech Republic	Poland	Slovenia
Easter Countries - Past political System: <i>Communism</i>				
The administrative pressure brought a long-lasting negative image of cooperatives				
Two most important laws have been issued on 1996 and 2012. Cooperatives (including the property issue) remains a very complex subject.	1991: fix of the damage and property for citizen to which it was taken on 1949 1992: partial reward for the property taken on 1939-1949 (Qafa, 2015)	Gradual transition Transform - ation from Planned (Regional) economy to Market (national) economy. (Avsec & Stromajer, 2015).	Less cases of privatization Transition passed easily and quicker (Ganev, 2001).	On 1990s these cooperatives were dissolved and the land was returned to farmers (Avsec & Stromajer, 2015).

Source: Data elaborated from authors

Major development and cooperative perspective in Albania

- Cooperation in Albania after 1990s – (post communism)

Situation of cooperatives in Albania seems to be more complex than the one from the groups we have analysed so far. Land privatizations started in 1991 and during the last two decades, production maximization through private property exploitation has been the dominant mentality among Albanian farmers. There have been only a few initiatives for cooperation during this period. However, this mentality of working together in a cooperative has been not so much successful due to the small farm size (average farm size range from 0.9 ha to 1.3 ha of land). Under these circumstances, only a few farmers have been able to become important actors in the agricultural market in Albania, to produce efficiently, reduce land fragmentation and increase farm size by renting or buying land (Musabelliu and Meco, 2011). The current situation indicates that most of the family farms in Albania operate for own consumption (subsistence farming) and a low number produce for domestic market.

Meanwhile during this period, some donations and projects have been the only attempt in supporting initiatives for the creation of cooperatives and production associations in Albania (Ministry of Agricultural, Rural Development and Water Administration in Albania).

- Current situation in Albania

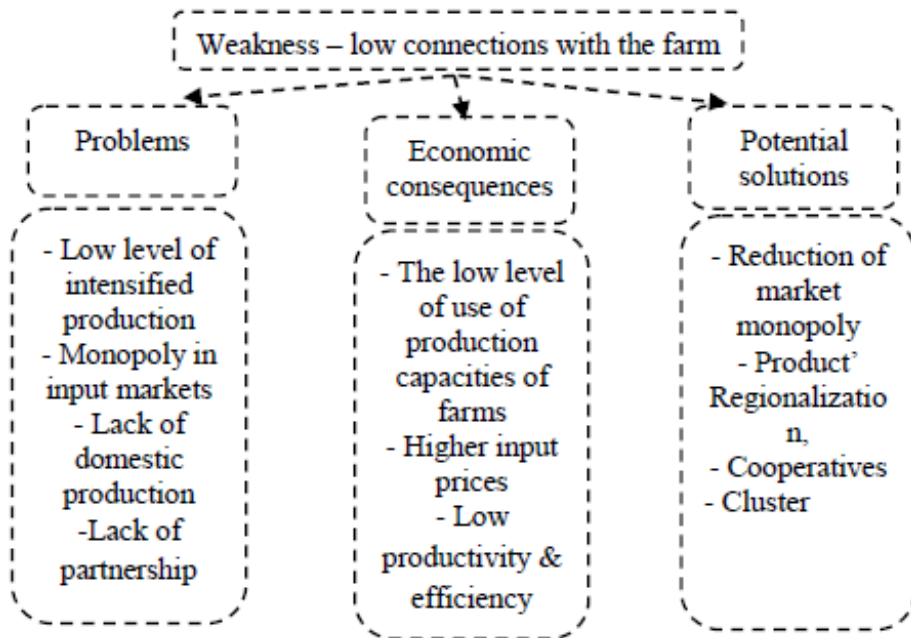
In addressing the situation regarding the cooperatives in Albania, specific conditions there have to be considered. Referring to Albanian economic growth and stability, development of cooperatives and farming is conditional on the growth and sustainable development of agricultural sector. Above all, this development means rational use of production capacities in agriculture in order to increase the supply of agricultural products. Contrary to what is already known, the realization of this objective is conditional on the presence of a number of factors sensitive to the effects of agricultural development, such as: the uncertainty of farmers' land ownership, the presence of very small farms with very little land and that is highly fragmented, the low level of lending to agriculture, the low level of use of inputs, problems related to irrigation and drainage, inadequate number of agriculture mechanics, high costs of labour, lack of transport and poor road infrastructure, the lack of security of energy resources and others.

No less significant are the problems related to marketing, infrastructure, information on markets, lack of partnership between producers and markets, lack of regionalization and specialization of production in agriculture in the face of fierce competition with farmers to import products, the opportunities for farmers to compete in local and regional markets, no stimulation and support for horizontal cooperation among farmers and others.

Certainly these problems are very broad and complex. In this paper, we make no attempt to analyse and provide solutions for the entire range of problems noted above; instead, we concentrate on evaluating the situation and potential for cooperatives. Taking the example of weaknesses in the farm supply in correlation with the connectivity of the farm.

Figure 2 explains the weaknesses that characterize the farm supply sector based on low connection to farms. This is taken from the most recent analysis by Musabelliu and Meco (2013) on farm management and farm difficulties in terms of access and presence in the market with the same rights as any other conventional business. As we can see from the above analysis there is a needed impact from institutions and governmental bodies to support cooperatives as a great vehicle in developing of agriculture in Albania. It is important to remind that Albania comes from a post-communism governmental system where everything is derived from and decided by the government.

Figure 2: Analyses of Albanian Farm sector



Source: Musabelliu B., Meco M., 2013

- Cooperative legislation evolvement and governmental role in Albania

The two major and most important laws on cooperative organization have been issued in 1996 and 2012 (as presented in Table 2). It is important to point out the fact that not only has the name slightly changed to get closer to the concept of agricultural cooperatives but there also have been words used in the law that describe cooperatives based on the International Cooperative Alliance definition as follows: “A co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.”

Table 2: Two main laws on cooperatives in Albania

Year	1996	2012
Name	Mutual Cooperation Societies	Agricultural Cooperation Societies
Law problematic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Incomplete laws ➤ Frequent changes of laws ➤ Non-implementation of laws from the state administration and farmers 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations have difficulties in the implementation of economic activities and operate under legal requirements of doing activities in public interest. • The non-profit organizations considered to be not the appropriate form for the development of economic activity within the agricultural cooperation. 	

Source: Sokoli O., Musabelliu B., Doluschitz R., 2016

It was not only the bad image that cooperatives have on farmer's mentality: there have also been frequent changes on the law of cooperatives due to the conceptualization of cooperatives. An especially important fact is that the laws have not been implemented on the right terms of approval from all the dependent institutions

Furthermore, Albanian farmers also had the option to register their companies as non-profit organizations, as provided by the Civil Code and the Law no. 8788 on "non-profit organizations", dated 05.07.2001. Based on their mission, non-profit organizations are exempt from taxation: they only pay personal income tax of 10%, and employers insurance (at least one person has to be employed as executive director). According to the law, when these organizations conduct any economic activity, they will be taxed on this part of the activity as any other enterprise. For this purpose, these organizations submit monthly budgets to the tax authorities.

In 2012 the Albanian Parliament with the help of the Spanish Cooperation approved a supportive law for cooperatives; Law Nr. 38 dated 05. 04. 2012 on "Agricultural Cooperation Association" which is a different expression of cooperative associations. The idea behind this terminology was to remove the negative connotation of the name "cooperative" inherited from communist times. Despite the law, the problems that go along with cooperation during market economy period (after 1990) have been the same.

It is important to emphasize that for instance, the history of cooperatives in Germany dates from 1864, when Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen has created the first aid association to support poverty in rural areas (History of cooperatives in Germany, <https://www.dgrv.de>). However, the law contains two essential differences from the principles of cooperatives:

- Firstly, the main principle of cooperatives "one person, one vote". In the Albanian law is stated that vote is associated with the capital invested, so a member with more capital invested has more votes than someone with less.
- Secondly, the law does not require and does not mention the existence of the Managing Council in determining the cooperative body, unless otherwise decided by the statute.

As the organizational model is designed to be implemented in different areas of the economy, such as the credit sector, insurance, constructions, etc., this results in the complication of the model and somewhat prohibitive if it is applied to agriculture or industry sector (Manual on Organization and Functioning of Agricultural Cooperation Organization, Extension Service Department, Research and Agriculture Information in the Ministry of Agriculture Food and Consumer Protection), due to the sensitivity of agriculture in Albania.

- Results achieved by experts' discussion

Besides legal problems and lack of initiatives by the policy-makers to promote cooperation development between farmers, there are many obstacles that have negatively influenced the cooperation and cooperative creation in Albania:

- A farmer and its family members aim to carry out every farming activity starting from production to the sale of the products into the market. They do not trust having their capital invested in common assets and someone outside of the family being in charge of managing these assets. Thus, the level and extent of available social capital involve in formal/informal collective action and their extent of involvement is very low. Whereas, Hansen and Morrow (2003) stress out that members can trust the cooperative organization since it has two crucial qualities: competency and reliability in making the best decisions and Theuvsen and Franz (2007) and Didier, Henninger and Akremi (2012) state that members of a cooperative decide to trust the cooperation based on their beliefs several positive reasons about its competence, reliability and carefulness in order to satisfy their needs and create added value as their advantage.
- In Albania, there is an inherited mentality about cooperatives that dates from the communist times under the name of “socialist cooperatives”. There is a common and comprehensive understanding among farmers that being under cooperative organization means that they merge private property and consequently lose it under common management and group proprietorship. There is a tremendous lack of knowledge among farmers in Albania about capitalist cooperatives, their role in maximizing farmer’s revenue and their success.
- Lack of leadership and management skills and competencies related to cooperative organization among farmers. Several farmers understand that doing business under market economy conditions means specialization and job separation. As a consequence, no one can do everything by themselves from production to marketing. As part of a supply chain, farmers must be focused on production, while other people with appropriate knowledge and skills must do the marketing and sales. What farmers still do not understand is that marketing operations are activities with high added value and they must cooperate in order to penetrate into the market (Carroll B., McCarthy O., and O’Shaughnessy M., 2012).
- Small farm size negatively affects the willingness of the farmers to cooperate. Recent studies indicate that bigger farms have positive impact on farmer’s

willingness to cooperate. According to the study, the chances of apple farms (in Korça region) to be involved in cooperative increases by 5.8% if the number of planted apple increase by 1,000 trees. The results of this study suggests that when switching from subsistence farming to commercial farming, cooperation seems to be more important and attractive (Musabelliu and Meco, 2011).

- Despite recently increased awareness, there is still a lack of financing in the form of grants or preferential credits from different sources towards cooperation in the farming sector in Albania (Livestock and Rural Development Center). Banking system credits have high interest rates, often unaffordable by most of the farmers. Peterson and Anderson (2012) underline the fact that, “a cooperative maximizes [member] value when it produces an optimal differential return to members over what they would receive in the absence of cooperative membership”.
- A high level of informality exists in the agricultural markets in Albania. Once a farmer is participating alone in the market, he is not part of any fiscal system, and the opposite happens when the farmer is part of a cooperative. By law, they become part of a fiscal system, and being part of a cooperative is considered as excessive cost by the farmers.

- **Key success and critical factors**

The relation of trust and cooperative performance. One research group in the Netherlands analysed the relationship between trust and the performance of cooperatives, both in terms of general trust (trust in other people), as well as trust in political institutions. In addition, they studied the relationship between the performance of cooperatives, the level of engagement in voluntary work and the general feeling of satisfaction with life (a prerequisite for trust) which has also been discussed by Valérie Barraud-Didier, Marie-Christine Henninger and Assâad El Akremi (2012). Based on some reports written by the Albanian Agricultural Cooperative Association there is a lack of trust among farmers. The lack of trust is related to property and common assets management, which seems to be an important factor that hampers cooperation and cooperative creation. A farmer and their family members aim to carry out every activity in farm starting from production and up to the sale of the products to market. This comes due to the above discussed factors and as pointed out by the Plunkett Foundation (1995), the use of the word “cooperative” in Central and Eastern Europe will not only create the wrong impression, it will also create barriers to progress. Following with the statement of Curtiss et al. (2004) and Schulze et al. (2001) the term “cooperative” seems to be a misleading term for farms in transition countries.

Cultural perception and cooperative relation. Cooperatives represent social capital networks and engagement in collective action, which is intended to produce potential benefits at the group level, exceeding simple self-interest (Bijman J., et al. 2012). Low levels of self-organization and networking have far more consequences for these countries than simply constraining cooperative development. For instance in Albanian case there is a lack of leadership and management skills and competencies related to cooperative organization among farmers. As a consequence, no one can do everything by themselves from production to marketing.

The need for a cooperative, in Balkan countries, is crucial due to small-sized farms, thanks to their capacity to accumulate. Something quite surprising in Albania is the fact that the bigger a farm is, the higher their willingness to be part of a cooperative. In contrast, in western countries, for instance, smaller farms are more likely to be part of a cooperative. Another positive aspect of cooperatives is that during the years of conflict in Europe, when fertilizers were scarce and their prices rose steeply, farmers began to see cooperative purchasing as the best (and sometimes the only) way to obtaining fertilizers (Hendrikse, G.W.J. & Veerman, C.P. 1997). However, the main role played by these cooperatives was to strengthen the social group that acted as their driving force: farmers of peasant origin operating mid-sized farms in regions such as Valencia or Catalonia were promoting a new agrarian capitalism (Calatayud and Millan, 1994 cited by Garrido, 2007). In France, cooperation played a decisive role in the expansion of mid-sized farms (Simpson, 2000); Spanish cooperation only did so in places where mid-sized landowning had already been present before the arrival of cooperatives (Garrido, 2007). It is important to show that combining explanations from different disciplines is the best way to understand the motives behind cooperation, its rhythms and its morphology. The success or failure of cooperatives depends not only on economic factors, but also on other factors that are social or political in nature. In the early twentieth century, a significant portion of European agrarian cooperation was sponsored by large landowners, claiming to have an ‘antisocialist’ vocation and showed themselves to be especially active as far as economic issues were concerned.

Discussions

By the time self-organized cooperative organizations’ were substituted by the collective ones the progress and development of cooperatives was interrupted. The assumption that new cooperatives could renew the former cooperative traditions was not very realistic because people’s collective memory had become weak as discourses on alternative modes of organization were suppressed in socialist countries (Theesfeld and Boevsky 2005). Hagedorn (2004) points out that it is rational to assume that the historical farming structure before socialist intervention and the ensuing changes during the transition process may have influenced the emergence and survival of new cooperatives. The term “cooperative” thus give the impression to be an inaccurate term for farms in these countries. This may explain why comparative productivity studies consistently fail to detect any performance differences between agricultural production cooperatives and other corporate farms (Curtiss et al., 2004).

As already mentioned, most of the farmers operate subsistence farms. These include the ambiguity of farmers’ land ownership. The presence of very small and fragmented land parcels, low level of lending to agriculture and use of inputs, problems related to irrigation and drainage, insufficiency of agriculture mechanisation, low labour productivity and thus high costs of labour, lack of transport and poor road infrastructure, absence of security of energy resources, etc.

In Albania, the small farmers are more afraid to be part of a cooperative organization.

This means that they have their land for own consumption and they are uncertain to be part of agricultural markets. Based on these very important and key factors, a radical change / support in many different aspects of the agricultural sector is needed. Cooperatives, at least most of them, should be product-oriented, not capital-oriented and this is something that still needs to be taken into account in terms of the perception of farmers. The common interest is to maximize the return on the resources owned by the members. Different markets means members are heterogeneous. Farmers control not only fixed resources but also capital goods with higher rates of depreciation and turnover. New balances between solidarity, democracy and competition will appear. However, it is likely that a considerable time period is required before we dare to speak of principles (Michael L. Boyd, 1987).

Reflecting on the farming situation the role of governmental institution is needed. The training of farmers on the established concept of cooperation may have a major impact (based on the German example mentioned above). It is vital that the law has to be defined and approved by all institutions which have direct and indirect impact on the implementation. Additional demonstration and assessment of the current laws on cooperative organization have to be shown and explained to farmers. As well, the establishment of a cooperative as a good example of the main improvement vehicle in the agriculture sector.

Last but not least important in developing countries such as Albania: it is vital to point out the importance of trust among farmers. In Albania, the trust people have for cooperatives is still low and there is a lot of work to be done.

Conflict of interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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