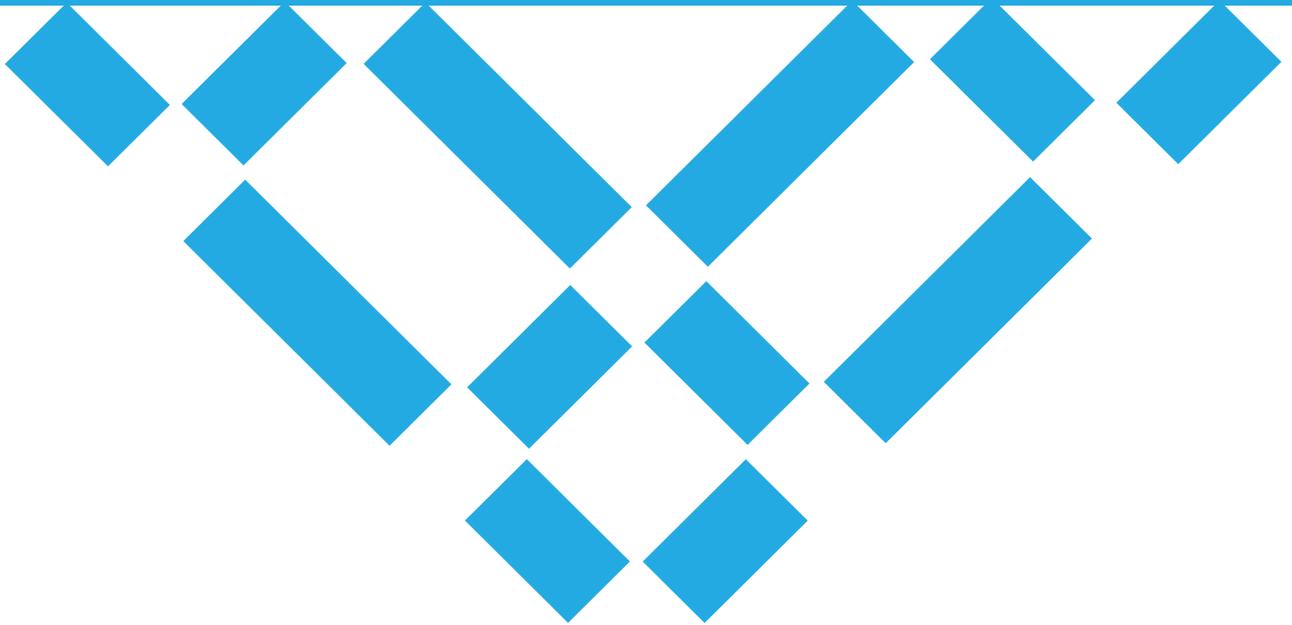


COLEÇÃO AZULEJO



ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SOCIAL CAPITAL

Dominik Noll and Maria Rivera (eds.)



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Universidade de Évora

Editors. Dominik Noll¹ and Maria Rivera¹

Contributions by Çiğdem Aydoğan², Maddalena Bettoni³, Fatma Handan Giray², José Muñoz Rojas¹, Theresia Oedl-Wieser⁴, Teresa Pinto Correia¹, José-Maria Díaz-Puente³, Georg Wiesinger⁴, Kerem Mertoğlu², Engin Gökhan Kulan², and Yusuf Ersoy Yıldırım⁵

¹ *Mediterranean Institute for Agriculture, Environment and Development (MED), University of Évora, Pólo da Mitra, Apartado 94, 7006-554 Évora, Portugal*

² *Eskisehir Osmangazi University, Faculty of Agriculture, Ali Numan Kirac Campus, 26160 Eskisehir, Türkiye*

³ *Escuela Técnica Superior de Ingeniería Agronómica, Alimentaria y de Biosistemas, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, Avda., Puerta de Hierro 2, 28040 Madrid, Spain*

⁴ *Federal Institute of Agricultural Economics, Rural and Mountain Research (BAB), Dietrichgasse 27, 1030 Vienna, Austria*

⁵ *Ankara University, Faculty of Agriculture, 06110 Ankara Türkiye*

Corresponding address: dominik.noll@uevora.pt

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Autores: Dominik Noll and Maria Rivera (eds.)

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 AIMS OF THIS BOOK (DOMINIK NOLL AND MARIA RIVERA)

The first decade of the 21st century marked an important period in global demographics. For the first time in human history more people were living in urban than in rural areas (World Bank, 2022). This shift has important implications for rural regions at large. An increasing number of people has been losing their direct connection to rural regions, which at the same time serve in many ways as enablers of those urban lifestyles. As more people are living in urban areas, consumption patterns of those urban lifestyles are significantly driving global resource use and carbon emissions, hence, much attention is given to cities and their sustainability (Swilling et al., 2018). Additionally, the rural context is often reduced to agriculture, overseeing that many of these regions are culturally rich and professional backgrounds of their inhabitants diverse. Notwithstanding the fact that agriculture and farmers significantly shape rural landscapes and are therefore central for rural development. However, rural and urban regions are closely intertwined and shaped by an ambiguous relationship. Rural regions are important deliverers of resources such as food, construction materials or energy. Rural regions are also places of aspiration and desire for a life closer to nature or in search for “wilderness” or “authenticity” of rural lifestyles, which people from cities would like to explore and experience during their visits. This ambiguous relationship is increasingly felt in rural regions in multiple ways e.g., through emigration of young people, the loss of jobs and economic possibilities, or the exploitation of land and infrastructure for businesses, enabling the flow of resources and capital into cities. Rural regions are therefore confronted with numerous challenges. For these regions it becomes important to continuously re-define or re-invent themselves in an increasingly urbanized and economized world, by at the same time protecting their natural assets and beauty and enabling ecologically, socially and economically sustainable lifestyles. Furthermore, the significance of rural regions for sustainable global development has been increasingly recognized, i.e., SDG 2 directly addresses the development of rural regions as mainly they are providing food for the world. Rural regions are also indirectly addressed in several other SDGs, as their development is closely tied to resource consumption at large (UN 2015). Furthermore, EU policies increasingly shift their focus towards supporting rural regions beyond agriculture and the FAO acknowledged that social networks and communication are central aspects to foster sustainable development in the rural context (European Commission 2020; FAO 2018).

Sustainable development in the context of this publication is understood as development acknowledging equal importance of economic, social and environmental sustainability. All of them equally important to create prosper rural areas with the ability to thrive. However, for long, the term prosperity has been associated almost exclusively with economic development, but experience has shown that this happened mainly at the expense of social wellbeing and the environment (Stiglitz *et al.*, 2009). New understandings of prosperity are now more in line with the Latin origin of the word, meaning “doing well”, “according to expectation” or “according to one’s hope”, and this includes much more than economic benefits (growth of output is not the same as growth of human welfare), which are strongly

determined by social and environmental factors (Rivera *et al.*, 2018). In fact, the new understanding of the term prosperity, when applied to rural areas, acquires special characteristics that are very much related to people's way of life and the context in which they are embedded (van del Ploeg *et al.*, 2008). Prosperity in rural areas should include factors such as social cohesion and engagement, achieved through cooperation and trust; environmental sustainability, which is considered one of the most important elements through which income may be generated in these areas; knowledge, which increases the ability rural people have to increase their resilience; and quality of life (Dayton-Johnson, 2001; Easterly *et al.*, 2006). All these factors are supported on, powered, and geared by social capital, which is the one of the key building blocks of the "rural web" (a myriad of encounters, transactions, interactions, and networks that link people, resources, activities and markets (Van der Ploeg 2008). Social capital is the glue that helps people to organize themselves in groups in order to achieve socioeconomic benefits for the whole community. However, while the significance of social capital for economic and social development has been covered extensively in literature, the specific role it plays for sustainable development of rural areas could and should be further explored. This publication aims to provide comprehensive information on the importance of social capital to achieve long lasting sustainable development that brings prosperity to rural areas. For this, both theoretical and practical information is provided with illustrative case studies that serve as best practice examples.

The present book is one of the outcomes of the Erasmus+ project "Strengthening Social Capital in Rural Communities for Rural Development" initiated by the International Agricultural Training Center of Türkiye (UTEM) (<https://www.socapitalproject.com/>). It involves the Directorate General of Lifelong Learning under the Ministry of National Education of Türkiye, the Eskesehir Osmangazi University (ESOGU) Türkiye, the Federal Institute of Agricultural Economics, Rural and Mountain Research (BAB) Austria, the Technical University of Madrid (UPM) Spain and the University of Évora (UÉVORA) Portugal. The next section of the introduction highlights current rural development challenges in Türkiye (1.2). Türkiye represents a special case as the project has been developed for providing knowledge about the importance of social capital for development initiatives in rural Türkiye. Current challenges in rural Türkiye therefore define the requirements for the content provided in this publication. Many contemporary challenges of rural regions are historically routed, why in section (1.3) we highlight challenges of rural regions in Austria, Spain and Portugal, and their historical context. Section (1.4) introduces the significance of social capital for the resilience of rural regions, before we go deeper into the conceptual background of social capital (2). The country specific information in the introduction serves as context to the carefully selected best practice examples of local and regional incentives that helped strengthen social capital in rural Austria (3.1-3.2), Spain (3.3-3.4), and Portugal (3.5-3.6). As the project aims at providing information to rural development trainers in Türkiye, we decided to include also examples from Türkiye (3.7-3.8). These best practice examples aim to highlight the ability of incentives in the rural context to strengthen social capital and create an added value for the community and the ecological environment of the region at large. Based on these examples we provide conclusions (4) reflecting on the role

of social capital to foster sustainable development in all three dimensions of the sustainability triangle.

1.2 THE NEED FOR STRENGTHENING SOCIAL CAPITAL IN RURAL TÜRKİYE

(FATMA HANDAN GIRAY)

Even though the rural population has decreased its share in the total population, rurality is socio-economically and culturally important in Türkiye. Gülümser et al. (2011) compared rurality between Türkiye and the EU-25 and found that Türkiye has a rather high share of rurality (Gülümser et al., 2011). The rural population in the total population of the country has been less than 10 % since 2013 according to administrative units' definition. However, according to various sources, this rate is between 20-25%, when considering the functionality and characterization of rurality (Yılmaz, 2015; Yologlu and Zorlu, 2020; MoEUC, 2022; World Bank, 2022).

People in rural areas in Türkiye are known to have solid and traditionally established social engagement within their communities. They visit each other frequently and attend regularly in each other's activities such as ceremonies of engagement, weddings, and funerals. Despite these well established and frequent exchange, the level of social capital accumulation is very low, which is shown in the contemporary challenges regarding cooperation for better working and living conditions. Türkiye is today confronted with serious problems regarding survival of entrepreneurship, mostly small farms, governance, and cooperation in rural areas. There are more than 2 million agricultural holdings in the country with an average size of about 6 hectares and more than half of them having less than 5 hectares of land (Giray, 2012). The average age of farmers is with 55 years fairly high (MoAF, 2022).

The lack of management capacities and human resources poses enormous challenges to the agrarian sectors and their institutions. Although the National Rural Development Plan (RDP) and (IPARD) Program, which are ongoing for several years, include some measures aimed at improving agricultural organization, a different approach is still needed to address these challenges more effectively. The need to improve the situation is not only felt in rural production related activities such as agriculture but also in the governance of short supply chains and rural tourism marketing, which has great impact on the development of rural regions (Giray, et al. 2019). The number of failed enterprises in this field is increasing. This is because people do not have the skills to work together within these newly created structures.

Previous studies in Türkiye mostly investigated social capital in terms of belonging, life conditions, trust, tolerance, responsibility, sharing, entrepreneurship (Ardahan, 2012; Turgut and Beğenirbaş, 2014; Arıcıoğlu and Ergin, 2009; Katipoglu and Armagan, 2020; Kustepeli and Yildirim, 2020). Few considered an additional specific variable such as informatics or living desires (Karabaş and Erenler Tekmen, 2019; Keleş et al., 2015; Keleş et al., 2018). Some studies considered social capital as only social relation (Eksi et al., 2011), while some of them take social capital equal to trust (Alacahan and Duman, 2011; Baykal

and Gürbüz, 2016). Some authors consider the The Work Values Questionnaire (WVQ) for rural and economic development indicators (Katipoglu and Armagan, 2020). There are also studies which consider social capital in a broader sense, covering cultural and sociological features, good manners, knowledge and competencies of people, sharing willingness and capacity, trust in other people and institutions, and social networks (Ongan, 2013; Işık and Çiçek, 2020). In Türkiye, mostly informal f-type networks (family and close friends) are used for social networks. Networks within the family, relatives or neighborhood still exist on a broader scale and social interactions such as participation in ceremonies of engagement/wedding/funeral fulfil the religious duties in larger groups in mosques (Alacahan and Duman, 2011). Most of the studies find a low level of trust pointing towards low levels of social capital. Despite the fact that social relations are practiced intensively there is no clear willingness to work together. Further, there are problems of self-organization and formal social relationships (Karabas and Erenler Tekmen, 2019). These findings are also consistent with the fact that participation in civil societies/NGOs is low despite intense informal relations within the Turkish society. Despite these generalized findings, rural areas of Türkiye have specific characteristics that need to be considered while projects, support and training schemes are prepared.

1.3 CHALLENGES OF RURAL REGIONS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THEIR HISTORICAL ROOTS (DOMINIK NOLL)

Socioeconomic dynamics in the European Union's (EU) rural regions are directly connected to industrialization and globalization. Industrialization not only changed agricultural practices throughout Europe and beyond, but entirely transformed rural life at large (Krausmann, 2004). One key aspect in this transformation is the availability of "cheap energy" in form of fossil fuels, which led to large-scale industry and business creation in urban areas and a declining demand in human labor for agriculture due to mechanization and the availability of petrochemical fertilizers. Before the use of fossil fuels, energy availability was largely bound to the area cultivated by farmers and farm workers and the availability of forests. Throughout the centuries there have always been structural reforms and changes in land management, but societies could only significantly improve their access to energy through expansion of territory. Farms relied mainly on human labor and draft animals, and were the main providers of jobs for the rural population. The availability of fossil fuels changed the energy regime entirely, and thus also agricultural practices, and caused a shift in the job market in rural regions. Full industrialization of agriculture happened comparatively late after the 1950s in north-western Europe and even later in south and eastern Europe through the widespread use of petrochemical fertilizers and the broader use of heavy machinery, even though steam-driven threshing machines and ploughs had been in use since the mid 19th century (Gingrich et al., 2013). Despite the relatively late industrialization of agriculture, the 19th century saw already significant changes in rural lifestyles through the implemented structural changes and the availability of industrial jobs, mostly in cities. Transport plays here a central role too, as initially the invention of the train brought new opportunities to rural regions as they could benefit from increasing demand for their products in the growing urban population (Fischer-Kowalski et

al., 2004). The exodus of the rural population to urban zones affected western and northern European countries since the 1950s and later then also south European countries (Cheshire, 1995). Initially emigration was compensated through high birth rates. The actual decline of population numbers in rural Europe happened later through declining birthrates after the 1970s.

On a global scale, the industrialization of agriculture is not completed as it does not unfold at the same time and speed in all world regions. This is reflected in the share of the economically active population employed in the primary sector, which even shows differences within Europe. Today, 4,4% of the economically active population of the EU 27 is employed in agriculture, forestry and fishing. In Portugal it is 7,3%, in Spain 3,6% and in Austria 3,4%. The trend shows in all EU countries a steady decline since at least 1975 (Eurostat 2022a). In Türkiye 16,7% of the economically active population is employed in farming, which shows that Türkiye is at an earlier stage in this transition pathway and agriculture thus represents a more significant employer in rural regions. On a global scale, the transformation of rural regions is still ongoing and indicated by the continuous decline of small-scale farms and the increasing commercialization of the agri-food market (Bailey et al., 2009; Guzmán et al., 2022).

This transformation has far-reaching consequences for rural regions at large. Not so long ago, small villages and rural regions in Europe were mostly self-sufficient with little number of products coming from outside and a good established local market for business and small-scale industries. This situation is entirely different in most European regions today. Subsistence farming declined substantially, people found increasingly work outside their villages and the car initiated a new era of mobility and flexibility. Globalization brought the availability of a wide range of products for often cheaper prices, for which production has mostly been outsourced, thus affecting also regional job markets. In the late 20th century commerce in most small villages and towns closed and new centers of commerce opened in larger towns. The consequence was that lifestyles became a lot more individualistic and less dependent on the villages people grew up and lived in. Today, many rural European regions are confronted with continuous population decline, structural shortcomings and low-income possibilities. This poses challenges to mainly people of the younger generation who leave these regions to find better education and income possibilities in urban centers. Not all regions are affected to the same extend and their resilience towards these changes depends strongly on their social capital (Li et al., 2019). Some of the developments leading to the current situation and their underlying socioeconomic drivers can be described more generally, while others are more country or region specific. In the following chapters we highlight the main aspects of this transformation and contemporary challenges of rural regions with population decline for Austria, Spain, and Portugal.

1.3.1 AUSTRIA

Austria is located in central Europe and shares borders with Germany, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Italy, Slovenia, Hungary, Slovakia and Czech Republic. Austria is a rather small country with approximately 9 million inhabitants on an area of 84,000 km². 2 million people alone live in the country's unproportionally large capital Vienna. The country's topography includes about 30% of the Alps on an east-west axis, parts of the Pannonian Plain in the east and the Danube river valley along the northern side of the Alps. These characteristics shape Austria's habitation patterns, as 70% of the country's territory has a mountainous character that enables only irregular settlement patterns, which is why most settlements are concentrated in the plains and valleys. The picture is thus heterogeneous and different regions are affected at different scales by the described problems and challenges.

Austria's location in central Europe has shaped its turbulent history and determines its role today within the EU as a transit country for people and goods. On a national scale the population is increasing, as the negative birthrate is balanced by immigration. Population growth is thereby mainly concentrated on Vienna and other urban centers such as state and provincial capitals. This results in opposite development needs, as urban settlements expect a population increase by 10% while especially interalpine regions expect to lose 10% of their population until 2030 (Gruber et al., 2018). One big challenge, especially for rural regions with population decline, is the increasing average age of the population, as it increases costs for health services in combination with a lack of potential employees. Austria is also one of the countries with the highest per capita rates for floor sealing due to infrastructure expansion within the EU (Umweltbundesamt, 2021). Reasons for this are comparatively high income levels and the dominant forms of settlements, which are especially in rural areas shaped by houses with an average of 100m² usable floor space and 2,2 people per household. Austria is among the countries with the highest GDP per capita within the EU. Tourism is an important factor, and two thirds of the economically active population are employed in the tertiary sector, while 25% are employed in the industry and only 3,4% in the primary sector (Eurostat 2022a). Agriculture is largely industrialized and produces mainly food and livestock feed. Austria has still a relatively large share of small-scale farms which contribute significantly to rural development and employment.

The accelerated transformation of rural Austrian regions happened mainly after 1950. While the years between 1850 and 1950 saw only a slight increase in agricultural yields, mainly through structural changes such as irrigation and selection of crops, the biophysical and social organization of agricultural systems had not changed significantly (Krausmann, 2016). World War II had a significant impact on Austrian agriculture that manifested in declining cropland area and agricultural outputs mainly due to the lack of general manpower (Gingrich et al., 2013). Between 1950 and 2000, agriculture in Austria underwent a relatively rapid industrialization process that affected different regions in different ways (Bruckmüller et al., 2002; 2004). Still there are some common patterns that affected most rural regions in Austria. External inputs and thus the dependence of Austrian farming systems on external regions increased through the use of fossil fuel driven machinery, petrochemical fertilizers and industrially produced livestock feed (Gingrich et al., 2013). At the end of the 19th century the decline of small-scale farmers and increase of farm size was already underway but only

after the 1950s, we can observe an acceleration of demographic changes leading to the current situation. In Austria, average farm size increased from 18,8 to 45,7 ha since 1951, and between 1995 and 2021 people employed in the primary sector declined by 55% (Eurostat 2022a). This transformation had also positive effects such as increase in yields and food production or increase in forest area through the abandonment of mountainous pastures, an effect referred to as “forest transition” (Gingrich, 2020). While the years between 1950 and the 1970s were shaped by national policies to achieve self-sufficiency in agricultural production, the focus was then on reducing overproduction to maintain existing farm structures. Consequently, yields rose only slowly since the 1980s and fellows were subsidized (Krausmann, 2016). After Austria’s accession to the EU in 1995 agricultural policies were much defined by the European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)¹. Globalization and the extension of the European Union lead to a direct competition of rural regions with international markets. Rural development policies in Austria were earlier implemented than in many other European countries and could help make this situation less severe than in Spain or Portugal, for example. Still, it poses a challenge to many regions.

Demographic changes in the 19th and first half of 20th century resulted in urban population growth without significant shrinking of the rural population, as birthrates remained largely positive (Beetz 2016). In the second half of the 20th century income possibilities outside of agriculture became more significant and population development in rural Austria increasingly depended on the availability of alternative income possibilities such as industries and increasingly tourism (Hiess et al., 2017). In recent decades, the population of Austria has been growing but only in cities, while economically disadvantaged regions suffer from continuously declining population numbers (Oedl-Wieser et al., 2018). Currently 30% of all districts and 40% of all municipalities in Austria are affected by population decline and it is expected that this trend continues (Dax et al., 2016). Reasons for this are manifold and not only connected to emigration. In recent years emigration is largely balanced with immigration and the main determining factor of population loss are declining birthrates. Besides negative birthrates there are structural reasons that contribute to population decline through emigration, such as reduction of jobs in agriculture, industry and business, an increase in high level education demand and a service sector that requires increasingly skilled personnel (OEREK, 2018). Data shows clearly that Austria is depended on immigration and especially remote regions with continuous population decline must focus on strategies that attract young people, especially women, through attractive perspectives for educational and career options beyond traditional role distribution (Hiess et al., 2017).

¹ The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is an EU policy instrument with the objective to provide affordable food for EU citizens and a good standard of living for farmers and the rural population at large (European Commission, 2022). The CAP provides subsidies for agriculture and rural development initiatives. It has substantially transformed since its foundation in 1962 and has been criticized for focusing too much on the economy of large-scale industrialized farming and too little on social and environmental aspects (e.g., Pe'er et al., 2020).

1.3.2 SPAIN

Spain is located in south-western Europe and covers the largest part of the Iberian Peninsula, the Canary Islands in the Atlantic, the Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean, and the two autonomous cities Melilla and Ceuta. Mainland Spain shares one border with France in the north along the Pyrenees and with Portugal in the West. The country has access to the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. Spain has a population of 47 million people on 506,000 km² of which 81% live in larger urban zones (World Bank, 2022). This number already indicates that Spain's population concentrates in certain areas such as the coasts and in the metropolitan areas of Madrid, Barcelona and Zaragoza, while many rural regions show very low population densities, such as Extremadura, Castilla-La Mancha or Castilla y León (≈ 27 inhab./km²). It is thus not surprising that Spain is confronted with big challenges regarding rural development.

Spain was until the mid 1970s under Franco's dictatorship and was hit hard by the global financial crisis after 2008. Except for the years after the financial crisis, Spain's population has been growing throughout the 20th century. Until the 1990s this growth was mainly caused by a positive birthrate, while it is largely driven by immigration since then. From 1950s to the late 1980s depopulation process of rural regions was quite radical and caused by agricultural modernization and migration of especially young people, who were looking for jobs in larger urban zones. Spain's rural regions lost up to 50% of their population in this period. This process did not unfold in all regions in the same way, and it is possible to distinguish between 3 different patterns: (1) high loss of population and moderate growth of the non-farming sector, (2) high loss of population but keeping the importance of the farming sector, and (3) moderate loss of population with a great development of jobs in industry and service (Garrido et al., 2017). The regional differences indicate that job and service creation slowed the depopulation process most effectively. Employment in the primary sector followed a similar trend as reported for Austria and is today at 3,6% of the economically active population (Eurostat 2022). It is not only agricultural development that determines rural challenges, but it has a special role in this context. The vanishing of small-scale farms has increased in recent years and thus again highlights the development crisis of rural regions in Spain at large (Guzmán et al., 2022).

Central for the development of agriculture and rural regions in Spain is the Spanish Civil War (1936 – 1939) and the dictatorship of Francisco Franco (1939 – 1975). Also, the structural nature of differences in land productivity and problems with the adaptation of technological advances to the Spanish environmental conditions represented for long a major obstacle for industrialization of agriculture and delayed the process (González de Molina et al., 2020). One good example is olive production, as cultivation practices and thus also yields and the requirement of a large number of seasonal workers did not change much until the 1980s (Infante-Amate, 2011). Still, the 20th century has changed farming in Spain entirely and thus also rural regions. In the 19th century farm economies were commodified through the Liberal Agrarian Reform, which resulted in the dismantling of all communal property rights. This process made wages and prices of agrarian commodities the main determining factors for farmers' decisions and resulted in a decline of income from farming towards the end of the century (Acosta et al., 2009). This trend reversed in the early 20th century where Spanish

agriculture has seen limited modernization but constant improvement in purchasing power and diets of rural populations. The demand in seasonal labor and low industrialization rate of the Spanish economy resulted between 1900 and 1930 only in a moderate decline of the agrarian population, which was mainly caused by increase in labor productivity through technological advantages such as irrigation and fertilization (Gallego, 2001). Household expenditures covered by income from agriculture declined in the first half of the 20th century as other income possibilities gained in significance but regional differences in job availabilities and uneven property distribution resulted in large regional income differences (Acosta et al., 2009). This resulted in the first workers unions in the rural context and consequently rising labor prices. Political instability of the early 1930s and the increasing influence of fascist-nationalist forces led to a slowdown of this process and resulted in worsening working conditions for the rural population, which deepened the social crisis and laid the ground for the Spanish Civil War. With the seizure of power of the Franco Regime in 1939, many people were forced to work in agriculture again due to international isolation and the aim of the government to become autarch in food supply. This caused a backlash to conditions similar with the beginning of the 20th century and had mainly negative effects for the rural population through declining income and living standards.

The implementation of the “Stabilization Plan” in 1959 resulted in the liberalization and industrialization of Spain’s economy (Prados de la Escosura et al., 2010). Foreign investment enabled the Green Revolution of Spanish agriculture and led to a quick recovery of production output. In this period commodity prices initially increased and created a beneficial situation for farmers before they started falling by the end of the 1970s but it also caused the exodus of large parts of the rural population through the availability of jobs in urban regions. While income of rural and urban households was similar in the 1950s, this changed entirely in the second half of the 20th century towards the disadvantage of rural regions, along with a shift in household expenditures from mainly food to other goods and services (González de Molina et al., 2020). This shift was caused by on the one hand side falling agrarian commodity prices because of agrarian industrialization and on the other because of employment possibilities in other than the agrarian sector. Falling commodity prices in combination with increasing input prices for agriculture made survival for farmers increasingly difficult, especially for small-scale farms. Since the later 1970s, farmers’ relative incomes are in decline in Spain and were mainly compensated through the European Union (EU) membership in 1986 and the provision of agricultural and rural development subsidies by the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The decline of people employed in the primary sector enabled increasing income per working population but only on the expense of declining small-scale farms (González de Molina et al., 2020). This situation became more severe since 2000 and exacerbated the problem of land abandonment and rural depopulation the short stabilization period of the 1980s and 1990s. Overall, the rate of the rural population employed in the primary sector declined from 50% of the economically active population in the beginning of the 20th century to 3,6% today. The agricultural industrialization process led to the disappearance of 2/3 of farms in Spain. Immigration has not yet balanced the population loss due to low birthrates and migration and the share living in rural regions declined from 40% in the 1960s to below 20% today.

Spain is divided into 50 provinces which are governed by 17 regional governments with their own legislation and jurisdiction in accordance with the central government in Madrid. Political decentralization efforts in combination with initiatives from local governments resulted in a new sort of localism since the 1980s, which democratize local regions and help integrating citizens into the decision process (Díaz-Puente et al., 2008; Colino and Del Pino, 2011). There is a large variation between regions as this process was largely dependent on the initiative of regional governments. In Spain, as described for Austria, for many people, especially young women, emigration to urban areas was the only option for upward mobility. Since the mid 1980s the combination of both national and regional policies with EU policies have managed to slow and even reverse the trend of population decline in many Spanish rural regions. It was due to the successful implementation of EU rural development programs that created a positive trend prior to the onset of the global financial crisis in 2008 (Garrido et al., 2017). These programs managed to build social capital in many rural areas through creating a balance between public and private sectors and improving the representative nature of social, economic, and political organizations (Díaz-Puente et al., 2008). For rural regions in Spain, it is important to foster these networks and attract young people with higher education. These communities have the potential to create a new rural identity by bringing new ideas for businesses and the agricultural sector.

1.3.3 PORTUGAL

Portugal is located in the far south-west of Europe at the Iberian Peninsula and on the Atlantic islands of the Azores and Madeira and covers an area of 92.212 km². Portugal shares a border only with Spain in the east and north of the country. Along its north-south axis Portugal shows a great diversity in landscapes, influenced by both Mediterranean and Atlantic climatic conditions. Numerous forts and castles along the border with Spain indicate the conflicting past of these two countries, determining Portugal's historical role in sea exploration and colonization. Portugal has 10,3 million inhabitants of which 66% live in larger urban zones. These are mainly concentrated in the metropolitan regions of Lisbon, with 2,8 million inhabitants, and Porto, with 1,7 million inhabitants, and in the coastal regions of the Algarve, Portugal's southernmost state. The Population concentrates mainly in coastal areas while the interior of the country shows mostly population densities below 50 people per km².

Portugal's rural policies and initiatives are since many centuries shaped by the question of how to achieve food self-sufficiency, which significantly contributed to Portugal's aims for territorial expansion through sea travel since medieval times. Environmental conditions and the lack of human labor were always limiting factors for achieving this goal, but the 18th and 19th century saw generally a positive evolution of the agrarian sector through moderate increase in labor productivity and agricultural output (Branco & Silva, 2017). In the 19th century agriculture was diverse and small-scale agricultural industries such as wool and linen textiles, tanneries, crockeries, mills and soap production were established (Matos 1991). Until today, land use in Alentejo, the second most southern state of Portugal, is shaped by Montado, an extensive land use system that combines cork and holm oaks with

pastures, cereal production and livestock herding (Pinto-Correia et al., 2011). The establishment of cork processing industries led to an expansion of Montado during the second half of the 19th century and positioned Portugal until today as the world leader in cork production (Faísca 2019). Still, food self-sufficiency had not been achieved and production output was largely achieved through area expansion and comparatively low levels of mechanization, why this goal was also at the center of protectionist policies transforming rural life and landscapes significantly at the end of the 19th century (Santos 2017). In this time special farming education programs and farmers' associations and networks were established to promote technological innovation and the integration of farmers' needs into policies. The combination of unfavorable environmental conditions, low literacy rates of the rural population and increasing difficulties to compete on international markets resulted in a slow adaptation of innovation and a persisting productivity gap between agriculture in Portugal and other European countries (Federico, 2010).

In the early 20th century, Portugal has gone through a time of political and social unrest with two military coups of which the second established the Ditatura Nacional (1926-1933) and Estado Novo (1933-1974) under the dictatorship of António de Oliveira Salazar. The Salazar regime declared food sovereignty of Portugal as one its central goals. In this time rural Portugal was strongly influenced by policies aiming for stimulating industrialization, while at the same time maximizing agricultural output through area expansion and increased labor input (Amaral and Freire 2018). The regime declared Alentejo as the wheat chamber Portugal's and promoted large-scale cereal production, which resulted in an expansion of area for crop cultivation. The Estado Novo also fostered the wood industry, mainly in Portugal's center and northern state, which became major employers in rural regions and eliminated pastures on which most small-scale farmers depended (Branco, 2011). Until today, the center and north of Portugal is shaped by Pine and Eucalyptus for wood and paper production and during the entire 20th century the forestry recorded higher growth rates than livestock and agriculture (Brito et al., 1997). Overall, these policies aimed at fostering internal colonization, reforestation and industrialization by increasing output from agriculture and forestry and the construction of large-scale dams for electricity production and irrigation systems (Almeida, 2020). Initially, the campaigns implemented under the Estado Novo were successful, resulting in the creation of jobs in both, urban and rural regions (Baptista 1996). The low level of technical modernization of agriculture due to international isolation increased labor demand and resulted in a relocation of people from the north to the south under poor working conditions and living standards. After some climatically beneficial years, wheat yields began to fall, and the wheat campaign had finally failed, by resulting in the erosion of genetic variability and soils (Saraiva, 2010). During the 1960s the situation worsened and created inequality and poor income and living conditions in rural Portugal, which in combination with labor demand in urbanized zones and other European countries and the demand of solders for the colonial wars of the 1960s caused further shrinking of the rural population. Economic autarky implemented by the Estado Novo resulted in widespread malnutrition. Only after the mid-60s Portuguese citizens had access to the nutritional requirements through the increase in food imports rather than agricultural productivity (Amaral & Freire, 2017).

Overall, the transition to industrialized agriculture happened much later than in northern and western European countries and farming represented much longer the main income of the rural population (Branco & Silva, 2017). The share of agriculture in the GDP fell from about one third in 1930 to roughly 3% in 2011, while the share of the primary sector in the economically active population fell from 60% to 10% in the same period (Amaral & Freire, 2017). Between 1960 and 2020 Portugal has lost 40% of its rural population (Worldbank, 2022). The decades after the Carnation Revolution in 1974 were transformative for rural Portugal in many ways. Right after the revolution, the communist party initiated reforms for the agrarian sector, again with the aim for food sovereignty and equal pay and rights for workers. These reforms were based on the idea of collective production units aligned with the Soviet Model. Owners of large estates were expropriated, and production of cereals and cattle was intensified. The system had failed by the end of the 1970s and land was returned to their former owners and areas cultivated with wheat were reduced. The EU accession in 1986 brought intensification, diversification, and modernization of Portuguese agriculture and made rural development subject to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and its reforms.

Since recently, the country has seen large scale industrialization and intensification of agriculture through, often foreign, investments from agri-food businesses. This is happening now on a fast pace and is mostly concentrated around hydrological megaprojects that were often planned during the Estado Novo and realized much later (Silveira et al., 2018). The largest artificial lake in Western Europe is located in the south of Portugal. The Alqueva dam was finalized in 2002 and since then, 70% of lands in the region have been sold to national or international agri-food businesses, employing immigrants as cheap laborers, often under worst living conditions, and resulting in the separation of local populations from all agricultural activities (Almeida, 2020). Similar developments have been reported from other regions in Portugal. This model adds new challenges to the already problematic situation of rural Portugal, as it is mainly focused on the maximization of exports and does not contribute to sustainable rural development at large. This relatively recent development points to two contrary trends in rural Portugal, where in some regions land use is intensified while in other completely abandoned and thus also contributing to increasing risk of forest fires (Muñoz-Rojas et al., 2019). Recent mining projects, such as the extraction of lithium for renewable energy technologies, are being seen as economic opportunities for rural regions but at the same time pose multiple threats and their long-term consequences are yet to be evaluated (Rodrigues et al., 2019).

Despite all efforts in keeping the rural population stable, rural exodus is ongoing in Portugal since the 1960s, which also affects urban centers in the periphery of the country to various extents (Alves et al., 2016). Rural depopulation has undermined social, economic and political significance of many regions. Especially since the implementation of austerity policies, as a consequence of the Portuguese debt crisis, these regions have suffered even more through the closing of public services in many municipalities and towns. In 2015, 164 municipalities were due to their low population densities and high age of the population considered as regions with special economic and social needs (Almeida 2018). Portugal is one of the most centralized countries within the OECD in which most of the public expense is being directed towards the large municipal areas, resulting in large differences in

purchasing power between the metropolitan regions and the rest of the country (Azevedo 2020). While in most other western European countries an image of good situated and educated farmers and rural citizens is on the rise, rural life in Portugal is often associated with backwardness and poverty. Rural development programs initiated by the Portuguese government have been so far mostly of limited success (Carlvaho and Simões 2018). It is the responsibility of local governments and actors to initiate bottom-up incentives and it is the role of national and EU legislation to develop programs that are suitable for regions with low population densities (Simões et al. 2018; Ferrão 2018).

1.4 SOCIAL CAPITAL AS MEANS TO STRENGTHEN RURAL AREAS’ RESILIENCE (GEORG WIESINGER)

Social capital refers to those stocks of social trust, norms and networks that people can draw upon to solve common problems. Since the beginning of the 1980s and even more during the 1990s the notion of social capital has become a focus for research and policy discussion. Plenty of surveys have been conducted on social capital and an increasing number of scientific papers have been published. Nowadays policy makers consider social capital as one of the factors that may contribute to a range of beneficial economic and social outcomes for a society. These outcomes include high levels of welfare and growth in GDP, more efficiently functioning labor markets, higher educational attainment, lower levels of crime, better health and more effective institutions of government. Those are arguments for public authorities and government to intervene and promote the accumulation of social capital.

Rural decline is frequently explained in economic terms by unfavorable conditions and by missing resources or support. But this link is not entirely clear and does not apply in all regions. Some particularly remote rural regions with a very sparse population, a lack of policy support, poor economic performance and unfavorable climatic conditions prove more viable than some regions with more plentiful economic resources and support. The prevailing neo-liberal paradigms in the age of globalization is challenging traditional rural economies and also the social fabric of rural societies. At the same time traditional sociocultural patterns frequently impede economic development and entrepreneurial objectives leading to an economic standstill. Consequently, there are many attempts to address the endogenous potential of the regions and to mobilize intrinsic local human resources. Networks of mutual support and self-empowerment are considered as a remedy against all negative «side-effects» such as impoverishment and out-migration. Simultaneously, these networks should also foster civic engagement and democratic participation on a local or regional level. Rural development programs and initiatives such as driven by the EU and other countries (see chapter 2.2) can be listed in this framework. At least, we can observe a unanimous understanding that local inhabitants should rely on their own power and less on public support.

Anthony Giddens (1990) states that our more ancient nature is embedded as much in geography as in temporality. Simultaneously, there is a process of disembedding between space and time and consequently a loss of special intimacy. Local societies are traditional

historical communities, but not stable or inert. There is a continuous process of transformation going on in rural areas, and the means of living, the population structure and social cohesion are in a state of flux. Yet, territory is more than just a social convention, and rootedness to geographical place is still valued. Some feel a deep empathy with a certain place or territory, others with the local social community, some with both. New communication means have made location less of a constant in fashioning of social relationships. However, there is a close relationship amongst people and long-term individual experience with a territory also enhances social capital.

Arnar Árnason et al. (2004) discussed the concept of social capital in the context of rural development. Also, they maintain that social capital may affect the performance, competitiveness and social cohesion of a community. Networks can be understood as articulating the flows of information and resources that produce rural development and society more generally. The intangible asset of social capital can be affected by policy, both positively and negatively. Measures which encourage the creation of networks and working modes enhancing co-operation are important elements in the creation of social capital. On the other hand, policies encouraging competition dividing rural inhabitants into winners and losers might be detrimental to the positive development dynamics and could mean a total breakdown of the rural social fabric.

Although the trajectory towards enhanced participation, civic engagement and self-reliance is considered unanimously as positive in the debate, many critics on some dark sides are also presented. As much as local communities tend to enclose their citizens and assist persons in need, their close ties also account for dynamics of social exclusion of all those who are unable or not willing to cope with the social norms of the local community. Thomas Dax and Ingrid Machold (2003) point out that young people with different lifestyles, persons with different opinions from the majority, those who do not participate in local associations or religious congregations may experience the dark side of locality. Besides that, local communities have a propensity of hostility towards incomers and thus prevent innovations. Putnam (2000) already conceived these “dark sides” of social capital as “toxic social capital”.

The desire to belong into a political environment that has subsumed the attachment once associated with neighborhoods, fraternal organizations, and the like may become a force for exclusion. As we self-select communities, those bonds become less meaningful, more transient, less binding, and more self-serving. Patrick T. Brown (2019) also reveals a critical view when he states that “the insulation that, both for good and bad, used to mark communities you couldn't choose, like a tight-knit ethnic group, is now a hallmark of self-selected political coalitions, which can create stage-managed communities that preserve home values, political shibboleths, polite discourse, and social homogeneity. The laudatory appeals to social capital as the salve that heals all wounds gloss over the fact that the very act of social exclusion — defining a community in opposition to an out-group — can drive an increase in measured social capital.” Putnam (2000) himself has admitted that “social capital is often most easily created in opposition to something or someone else, as any high-school coach getting ready for a big game could tell you.

2 CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND *(GEORG WIESINGER)*

2.1 TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

John Locke (1632-1704) was probably the first who introduced the term “civil society”. Although each individual in the state of nature has the right to enforce the natural law in defense of property interests, the formation of a civil society requires that all individuals voluntarily surrender this right to the community at large (Wiesinger, 2017). Civil society and more recently “social capital” refer to the space between the individual and the government or state. Social capital may first have appeared in a book published in the second decade of the 20th century in the United States that discussed how neighbors could work together to oversee schools. Lyda Judson Hanifan (1916) is credited with introducing the concept of social capital. He defined social capital as “the tangible substances [that] count for most in the daily lives of people: namely good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit. (...) The individual is helpless socially, if left to himself. If he comes into contact with his neighbor, and them with other neighbors, there will be an accumulation of social capital, which may immediately satisfy his social needs and which may bear a social potentiality sufficient to the substantial improvement of living conditions in the whole community. The community will benefit by the cooperation of all its parts, while the individual will find in his associations the advantages of the help, the sympathy, and the fellowship of his neighbors (Hanifan 1916, quoted by Putnam 2000).” Bourdieu (1979 and 1986) and Coleman (1988), from whose work the idea originated, emphasized the importance of social ties and shared norms to societal well-being and economic efficiency, and their concept has widely been used in the study of social inequality and hierarchical social structures. Putnam (1993 and 2000) above all, linked the ideas of social capital to the importance of civil associations and voluntary organizations, and emphasized positive aspects of social control.

2.1.1 PIERRE BOURDIEU – CONFLICTS AND POWER OVER SOCIAL CAPITAL

Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of social capital (1986) puts the emphasis on conflicts and the power function (social relations that increase the ability of an actor to advance her/his interests). He distinguished different forms of capital. Economic capital is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the forms of property rights. Cultural capital, which may be institutionalized in the forms of educational qualifications, includes what economists consider as human capital, but it is a wider concept. Symbolic capital can be referred to as the resources available to an individual on the basis of honor, prestige or recognition while social capital encompasses the resources derived from one’s belonging to a group. Social positions and the division of economic, cultural and social resources in general are legitimized with the help of symbolic capital. Relations of social capital may exist on the basis of material and/or symbolic relations of exchange, and they may also be institutionalized in the forms of a title of nobility. Thus, social capital can be defined as the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession

of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition. The membership in a group provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity owned capital, a credential which entitles them to credit. According to Bourdieu, the amount of social capital held by an individual depends on the extent he or she is able to mobilize a social network and from the capital (including the economic, cultural or symbolic capital) held by the members of that network. Social capital like other types of capital is unevenly distributed, mobilized, utilized, transformed and exchanged in society. From the perspective of Bourdieu, social capital becomes a resource in the social struggles that are carried out in different social arenas or fields. For example, the problem of trust (which Bourdieu does not discuss much explicitly) can now be dealt with as a part of the symbolic struggle (or the absence of struggles) in society. Trust as a potential component of symbolic capital can be exploited in the practice of symbolic power and symbolic exchange.

2.1.2 ROBERT D. PUTNAM – COLLECTIVE ACTION AND DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Robert D. Putnam (1993), using Italy as an example, explored the conditions for creating responsive and effective democratic institutions that lead to economic growth. Putnam points out that features of social organization, such as trust, norms and networks of civic engagement (associations) can substantially improve a society's efficiency in overcoming dilemmas of collective action. Putnam uses social capital as an attribute of the social structure in which a person is embedded and emphasizes that social capital is "not the private property of any of the persons who benefit from it" (Putnam, 1993). Networks of civic engagement like neighborhood associations, choral societies, cooperatives, sports clubs, mass-based parties represent intense horizontal interaction which essentially promote trust, reciprocity and co-operation within the society. In contrast, vertical networks such as patron-client relationships can, according to Putnam, not sustain social trust and co-operation and rather tend to undermine solidarity, especially among clients. Putnam's concept of social capital contains three components: moral obligations and norms, social values (especially trust) and social networks (especially voluntary associations). Putnam's central thesis is that if a region has a well-functioning economic system and a high level of political integration, these are the result of the region's successful accumulation of social capital.

In an investigation on American community Putnam (2000) refers to the importance of bridging and bonding social capital. Bonding social capital is a type of social capital that describes connections within a group or community characterized by high levels of similarity in demographic characteristics, attitudes, and available information and resources. Bonding social capital exists between "people like us" who are "in it together" and who typically have strong close relationships. Examples include family members, close friends, and neighbors. Bonding social capital is between social groups, social class, race, religion or other important sociodemographic or socioeconomic characteristics. Bonding social capital is good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity. Dense networks in ethnic enclaves e.g., provide crucial social and psychological support for less fortunate members of the community. Bridging networks, by contrast, are better for linkage

to external assets and for informal diffusion. “Weak ties, that link me to distant acquaintances to move in different circles from mine are actually more valuable than strong ties that link me to relatives and intimate friends whose sociological niche is very likely my own. (...) Bonding social capital, by creating strong in-group loyalty, may also create strong out-group antagonism.”

2.1.3 FRANCIS FUKUYAMA – SOCIAL CAPITAL AS THE CULTURAL COMPONENT OF MODERN SOCIETIES

Francis Fukuyama (1999) considers social capital as important to the efficient functioning of modern economies, and as a prerequisite of a stable liberal democracy. Social capital constitutes the cultural component of modern societies, which in other respects have been organized since the Enlightenment on the basis of formal institutions, the rule of law, and rationality. Building social capital has typically been seen as a task for "second generation" economic reform. But unlike economic policies or even economic institutions, social capital cannot be so easily created or shaped by public policy.

According to Fukuyama, the radius of trust is the circle of people among whom cooperative norms are operative. Virtually all forms of traditional culture-social groups like tribes, clans, village associations, religious sects, etc. are based on shared norms and use these norms to achieve cooperative ends. Economic modernization was seen as antithetical to traditional culture and social organizations and would either wipe them away or else be itself blocked by forces of traditionalism. Traditional groups have a narrow radius of trust. In-group solidarity reduces the ability of group members to cooperate with outsiders, and often imposes negative externalities on the latter. For example, in the Chinese parts of East Asia and much of Latin America, social capital resides largely in families and a rather narrow circle of personal friends. It is difficult for people to trust those outside of these narrow circles. Strangers fall into a different category than kin. A lower standard of moral behavior applies when one becomes, for example, a public official. This provides cultural reinforcement for corruption. In such societies, one feels entitled to steal on behalf of one's family.

Fukuyama points out that social capital is an instantiated informal norm that promotes cooperation between two or more individuals. The norms that constitute social capital can range from a norm of reciprocity between two friends, all the way up to complex and elaborately articulated doctrines like Christianity or Confucianism. They must be instantiated in an actual human relationship: the norm of reciprocity exists in potential in my dealings with all people but is actualized only in my dealings with my friends. By this definition, trust, networks, civil society, and the like which have been associated with social capital are all epiphenomenal, arising as a result of social capital but not constituting social capital itself.

2.1.4 JAMES S. COLEMAN – FUNCTION AND STRUCTURE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

James S. Coleman (1988) defined social capital by its function. He introduced and illustrated the concept of social capital according to the social structural conditions arising for dropouts from American high school. The conception of social capital as a resource for action is one way of introducing social structure into the rational action paradigm. Coleman examined three forms of social capital: obligations and expectations, information channels, and social norms. The role of closure in the social structure in facilitating the first and third of these forms of social capital. He carried out an analysis of the effect of the lack of social capital available to high school sophomores on dropping out of school before graduation and examined the effect of social capital within the family and in the community outside the family.

Social capital is not a single entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspects of social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors – whether persons or cooperate actors – within the structure. Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible. Like physical capital and human capital, social capital is not completely fungible but may be specific to certain activities. If physical capital is wholly tangible, being embodied in observable material form, and human capital is less tangible, being embodied in the skills and knowledge acquired by an individual, social capital is less tangible yet, for it exists in the relations among persons. A given form of social capital that is valuable in facilitating certain actions may be useless or even harmful for others. Unlike other forms of capital, social capital inheres in the structure of relations between actors and among actors. Coleman indicates that social capital depends on the social structure, e.g. the trustworthiness of the social environment which means that obligations will be repaid. Without a high degree of trustworthiness among the members of a group institution would be marked by a high degree of social disorganization, or in other words by a lack of social capital. Social capital constitutes of different forms. One is the potential for information that inheres in social relations. Information is important in providing a basis for action, another are norms and effective sanctions. When a norm exists and is effective, it constitutes a powerful, though sometimes fragile, form of social capital. Effective norms that inhibit crime make it possible to walk freely outside at night in a city and enable elderly persons to leave their houses without fear for their safety. A prescriptive norm within a collectivity is the norm that one should forgo self-interest and act in the interests of the collectivity. Coleman states that “a norm of this sort, reinforced by social support, status, honor, and other rewards, is the social capital that builds young nations (...) strengthens families by leading family members to act selflessly in the ‘family’s interest’, facilitates the development of nascent social movements through a small group of dedicated, inward-looking, and mutual rewarding members, and in general leads persons work for the public good.” Coleman also claims that closure of the network structure, in terms of existing ties between actors, facilitates the emergence of effective norms which in turn maintain the trustworthiness of others. These norms strengthen the social capital within that network structure. In a more open network structure, the violation of norms goes undetected and therefore unpunished, which leads to less trust being developed

within the network structure. An open network structure is therefore weaker with respect to social capital. Social capital is seen as connected to the creation of norms and trust within a single and cohesive network structure.

2.1.5 JEREMY RIFKIN – A TERRITORIAL APPROACH TO SOCIAL CAPITAL

A territorial approach to social capital was brought into discussion by Jeremy Rifkin (2001). He states that all real culture exists in geography because that is where intimacy takes place, and without intimacy it is not possible to create bonds of social trust and engender true feelings of empathy. Rifkin recognizes a new era dawning on the horizon radically different from any we have known. Buying things in markets and owning property become outmoded ideas, while “just-in-time” access to nearly every kind of service, through vast commercial networks operating in cyberspace, becomes the norm. We increasingly pay for the experience of using things-in the form of subscriptions, memberships, leases, and retainers- rather than for the things themselves. Already, millions of Americans have given up ownership of their automobiles in favor of leasing cars as a service and are renting everything from software to furnaces. Similarly, companies around the world are selling off real estate, shrinking inventories, leasing equipment, outsourcing activities, and becoming "weightless." Ownership of physical property, once considered a valued asset, is now regarded as a liability in the corporate world. Rifkin argues that the capitalist journey, which began with the commodification of goods and the ownership of property, is ending with the commodification of human time and experience. In the future, we will purchase enlightenment and play, grooming and grace, and everything in between. "Lifestyle marketing" is the buzz in the commercial world as more and more consumers become members of corporate-sponsored clubs and participate in corporate-sponsored activities and events. People are even living out their lifestyles in planned commercial residential communities. The business of business, therefore, is no longer about exchanging property but, rather, about buying access to one's very existence in small commercial time segments. In the Age of Access, Rifkin asks, will any time be left for relationships of a noncommercial nature? In this regard social capital promotes access to resources and social capital is also assumed to be produced networks, defined as social actors, or nodes and flows of information and resources.

2.1.6 GENDER, ECONOMIC AND ENTREPRENEURIAL ASPECTS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

Karin Tillberg Mattsson et al. (2004) drew empirical findings originating from a qualitative study in Sweden on the role of social capital in rural development. They underline that networks can also be formal, with an explicit and public structure, or informal, with no explicit name, and yet an identifiable group of nodes and flows. Civic engagement, measured in terms of aggregated data on e.g., membership of voluntary associations, is commonly used as an indicator of social capital. By way of taking a gender perspective and applying a qualitative method, they argue for the importance of nuancing between different contents of voluntary engagement, as these can have impact on the quality of social capital

built. Uneven gender relations within and between associations are furthermore seen to have consequences for the power of built up networks to influence the officially promoted line of local development. They observe a close connection between a lively participation in voluntary organizations and a flourishing economy and on the individual level, the relationship between a person's engagement in the voluntary sector and his or her position on the labor market and in local business. This research is particularly concerned with gender aspects of this relationship. More common for men than for women the engagement in a voluntary organization is "interwoven" with paid work or the own business, in that for example networks built through the association membership are used in the own business. Traditional gender roles within voluntary associations are put forward as one possible obstacle for the rejuvenation and supply of members in the future.

Another study focusing on a gender perspective of social capital was conducted by Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart (2003). They investigated profound changes in traditional sex roles during the twentieth century. Modernization has changed cultural attitudes towards gender equality and analyzes the political consequences. They revealed a gender focus of social capital. Associational membership can be vertically and horizontally segmented for women and men. As a matter of fact, women are often the promoters of social cohesion with their both formal and informal networks.

Michael Woolcock and Deeta Narayan (2000) traced the evolution of social capital research as it pertains to economic development and identify four distinct approaches the research has taken: communitarian, networks, institutional, and synergy. The evidence suggests that of the four, the synergy view, with its emphasis on incorporating different levels and dimensions of social capital and its recognition of the positive and negative outcomes that social capital can generate, has the greatest empirical support and lends itself best to comprehensive and coherent policy prescriptions. The authors argued that a significant virtue of the idea of and discourse on social capital is that it helps to bridge orthodox divides among scholars, practitioners, and policymakers.

Ana Kopren and Hans Westlund (2021) investigated the role of bridging and bonding social capital in entrepreneurs' networks. They focused on the value and effect of social capital stemming from cross-ethnic business cooperation on social networks and society in the aftermath of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and North Macedonia. This survey contributes to deeper understanding of the social function entrepreneurship conveys beyond its economic role. It highlights the capacity of entrepreneurs to produce and generate social capital across ethnic lines. The results show that cross-ethnic business relationships formed between entrepreneurs create benefits not only for entrepreneurs but also for building social capital across ethnic lines, thus forming valuable, yet depleted, social capital in post-conflict societies. Voluntary relationships between managers and business owners set a valuable model of weak ties facilitating associative behavior among divided ethnic groups. Business exchange and relationships create social values that transcend a simple financial transaction. Value is in the form of friendship and trust, a reliance that maintains entrepreneurs' relationships and that contributes to the societal social capital.

2.2 SOCIAL CAPITAL AS A SUBJECT OF INTERNATIONAL INTEREST

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2001) defines social capital as “networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate cooperation within or among groups”. A 2013 OECD project proposed four distinct interpretations of social capital, as follows: (i) Personal relationships, referring to the structure of people’s networks (i.e. the people they know) and the social behaviors that contribute to establishing and maintaining those networks, such as spending time with others, or exchanging news by telephone or email. (ii) Social network support, which is a direct outcome of the nature of people’s personal relationships, and refers to the resources – emotional, material, practical, financial, intellectual or professional - that are available to each individual through their personal social networks. (iii) Civic engagement, which comprises the activities and networks through which people contribute to civic and community life, such as volunteering, political participation, group membership and different forms of community action. And finally, (iv) trust and cooperative norms, referring to the trust, social norms and shared values that underpin societal functioning and enable mutually beneficial cooperation. The concept primarily refers to different kinds of trust, as well as norms of reciprocity and non-discrimination. The types of trust that are most often considered as forms of social capital are generalized trust (i.e. trust in ‘others’, including strangers) and institutional trust, which can refer to political institutions as well as the judiciary, police, the media or other institutions.

The European Union and European institutions have also become aware of the importance of developing and strengthening social capital networks in order to assure social cohesion and eliminate social exclusion particularly since the enlargement of 2004 when ten eastern and southeastern European countries became members of the EU (see chapter 2.5 on measuring social capital). The EU realized that a social economy both uses and generates social capital and thereby facilitates local economic development, social cohesion and inclusion. A project launched by the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (European Commission, 2013) aimed at six objectives: (i) to model the range of ways in which different social enterprises in the social economy can produce and reproduce social capital; (ii) to identify the ways and extent to which social capital produced and reproduced in family and community networks influences the development of social enterprises in the social economy; (iii) to generate indicators and measures of the social capital produced by social enterprises; (iv) to generate a new model of local economic profiling which incorporates a concept of social capital and develop measures and indicators of this; (v) to generate an augmented model of social auditing which incorporates a concept of social capital and develop measures and indicators of this; and (vi) to produce an assessment of the role of social capital in the social economy in developing local social cohesion and social inclusion.

The EU puts a strong bias on innovative local modes of organization and cooperation through local action groups fostered by LEADER programs. LEADER is a European Union initiative first introduced in 1991 to support rural development projects in rural, coastal and urban areas of EU member countries. LEADER projects are managed by local action groups (LAGs). Each project must involve a relatively small area, with a population of between

10,000 and 100,000. The main goal is to engage local actors in the design and delivery of strategies, decision-making and resource allocation for the development of their rural areas. LEADER follows certain principles that are very supportive for the development of social capital:

- Area-based: taking place in a small, homogeneous socially cohesive territory
- Bottom-up: local actors design the strategy and choose the actions
- Public-private partnership: LAGs are balanced groups involving public and private-sector actors, which can mobilize all available skills and resource
- Innovation: giving LAGs the flexibility to introduce new ideas and methods
- Integration: between economic, social, cultural and environmental actions, as distinct from a sectoral approach
- Networking: allowing learning among people, organizations and institutions at local, regional, national and European levels
- Co-operation: among LEADER groups, for instance to share experiences, allow complementarity or to achieve critical mass

In end of 2018 around 2,800 Local Action Groups (LAGs) existed in the EU, covering 61% of the rural population and bringing together public, private and civil-society stakeholders in a particular area. LEADER is implemented under the national and regional Rural Development Programs (RDPs) of each EU Member State and co-financed from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). In the 2014-2020 programming period, the LEADER method has been extended under the broader term Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) to three additional EU Funds: (1) the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), (2) the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and (3) the European Social Fund (ESF).

2.3 INTERNATIONAL STUDIES ON SOCIAL CAPITAL IN RURAL AREAS

In Iran Ali Ahmandi Firouzjaie et al. (2007, quoted by Giray 2021) conducted a study for measuring social capital of rice producers and determining the influence of farmers' social capital on adoption of Rural Development Programs in the Caspian Sea region. According to their findings “the components of cognitive social capital (such as social trust, social solidarity, exchange of information), and components of structural social capital (such as social participation and collective actions, and social networks) were higher in adopters of Rural Development Programs than non-adopters of the programs. As various aspects of social capitals increase in individuals or community, the probability of deciding to adopt the Rural Development Programs increases, therefore it could be stated that social capital is a determinant factor in adoption.” It is also found that social capital has a significant role in building and maintaining effective participation, collective action, and increasing motivation.

Stavriani Koutsou et al. (2014) conducted a study to examine the social capital of a rural society, especially when it comes to its contribution to local development in the rural areas in northern Greece. The notion of social capital analysis is presented, mainly by focusing on social capital's role in adjusting local dynamics among young farmers. The results of the study "discloses two findings of crucial importance in regard to social capital, trust and collective actions. Despite the fact that in the area, one can find a large number of informal networks, in general young farmers' trust in persons, institutions and organizations is relatively limited. Their low social capital provides an effective explanation to the fact that Greek young farmers, in particular, and other farmers, in general, fall behind with adapting to modern circumstances in the farming sector. Under these circumstances they can only marginally benefit from opportunities, while they remain exposed to threats. As a result, they adopt a defensive attitude, which averts change. This finding becomes even more discouraging, considering that it involves young people, who are expected to bear changes. The other finding worth discussing is that only some young farmers differentiate from this pattern and may eventually prove to be the pioneers of a change. Elaborating on the profile of different types it is obvious that, young farmers' relatively increased trust in institutions (institutional trust) is linked to poor participation in collective actions. On the other hand, young farmers with reduced trust in institutions and higher trust to friends and other persons (personal trust) are predominantly those who endeavor collective actions."

In Australia Jenny Onxy & Paul Bullen (2000) conducted a study on social capital across five communities: two rural, two outer metropolitan areas and one inner-city area of Sydney. They noted that social capital was generally higher in the rural communities compared with the urban centers, particularly in relation to community connections, feelings of trust and safety and neighborhood ties, which would suggest that local ICT initiatives may be more successful and sustainable in rural areas. However, while bonding capital may be high this is not always complemented by sufficient levels of bridging capital. This may leave rural ICT initiatives as vulnerable and having a greater need for opportunities to collaborate or for government support of associations.

Maria Rivera et al. (2018) discussed the role of social capital in agricultural and rural development through case studies in Germany, Spain, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia, Denmark and Israel and asked if social capital can be 'built' in support of agricultural and rural development. They examined the elements of trust and the quality of relationships, co-operation, culture and traditions, and sense of community. They found that all elements play important roles in agriculture and rural development in different ways. All of them were appeared as critical elements in development. However, trust and quality of relationship, common interests and cooperation were most referred elements while sense of community, culture and traditions were referred less frequently and in less tangible ways. They also underline that "social capital plays a very important role in agricultural and rural development."

2.4 PREREQUISITES FOR A THRIVING SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social capital needs some basic requirements to thrive such as the recognition as autonomous and independent human actors with equal rights, good governance, a stable legal framework with guarantees planned and sustainable actions and finally social inclusion and gender equity.

Axel Honneth (2018), Georg W.F. Hegel (2018) and George H. Mead (1967) are pointing out the importance of equal human rights, recognition and self-esteem in motivating human action. The character of public rights enables the formation of self-esteem and that a person is universally recognized as a morally eligible person. Recognition likewise permits a person to share the qualities of a community with all other members and to participate in a discursive will-building. Another prerequisite for a thriving social capital is self-respect which means the possibility of referring positively to oneself.

Love, justice and self-respect create the social conditions under which human subjects can arrive at a positive attitude towards themselves. The acquisition of self-confidence, self-esteem and self-recognition make person learn to understand himself/herself as an autonomous being.

Hartmut Rosa (2020) states that for the quality of the human world relationship, it is crucial that subjects dare to master challenges, influence the environment in a controlled manner and thus be able to make a planned impact. People depend on the desire for resonance relationships. The spheres of work or family, but also of art, religion and nature can serve as modern resonance spaces. Many people establish their resonance axes in fields like reading or visiting museums, cinema or worship, going to the forest, the mountains or the sea, professional work, family, sports club, voluntary service or a circle of friends. Sociocultural dynamics and growing economic constraints tend to create increasing resonance blockages. The disturbance of resonance axes may cause existential individual or cultural alienation.

Good governance refers to all processes of governing, the institutions, processes and practices through which issues of common concern are decided upon and regulated according to a declaration of the UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. Good governance adds a normative or evaluative attribute to the process of governing. From a human rights perspective it refers primarily to the process whereby public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources and guarantee the realization of human rights.

Social capital follows an inclusive approach that also tackles with the matter of power distribution. Socially and economically weak groups may be given to participate in their communities accordingly. The recognition of gender aspects is another important issue. Social capital is unlike to develop in a local community with associations, organizations and programs that are just referring to the interests of male. Thus, special programs for social fringe groups and towards women empowerment are needed.

2.5 MEASURING SOCIAL CAPITAL

Up to now several attempts have been undertaken for conceptualizing and measuring social capital. Scholars are challenged by finding appropriate indicators and the establishment of social capital data bases. The main social capital indicators invented by Putnam (1993, 2000) are closely connected with individual and collective wellbeing, social networks, civic engagement and cooperation towards a common target, mutual social trust, solidarity, understanding, recognition of norms and values, open information and communication, social cohesion and inclusion, empowerment and political action. Some of the indicators are not differentiated enough. For instance, Putnam (1993) suggested the number of associations per local inhabitants for measuring social capital. Both he says just very little about the structure of local population which is attracted by those associations and about the gender issue. Women, young people and persons with distinct lifestyle or cultural interests may find themselves not affected by the given associations. Therefore, it appears to be crucial to also emphasize social, economic, gender and political inequity.

Further indicators for social capital refer to the state of democracy, civic associations, family-neighbor-work relations, independence of courts, students' movements, degree of trust for government and unions, individual freedom, the absence of corruption, bribery rates, violence, crime rate and social security. Some indicators are even focus on "dark sides" of social capital (Putnam, 2000).

Handan Giray (TNA - Training Need Analysis Report, 2021) conducted a survey for the measurement of social capital in two Turkish case study regions (Sarıcakadistrict in Eskişehir Province: 120 face-to-face interviews and Göktaş village in Eğirdir District in Isparta Village: 84 face-to-face interviews). She applied a scale developed by Onxy & Bullen (2000) that became adapted by Ardahan (Bireylerin sosyalsemaye profili: Antalya örneği, 2012). The 68 Likert-scaled items are tackling the dimensions of participation in local committees, social representation, trust and security feelings, neighborhood relations, relationships in family and with relatives, tolerance for dissimilitude, value of life and relationship at work/school, trust in people and in living environment, initiative for social issues and social representation. The adapted Onxy and Bullen's scale proofed to be reliable and valid for the estimation of social capital within the two analyzed Turkish rural communities.

Table 2-1: Example: analysis of social capital elements for Göktaş Village of Eğirdir District in Isparta. Source: Giray (TNA report 2021)

Statements		YES (1)	INDECISIVE (2)	NO (3)	TOTAL	Mean (1-3)
1.I am happy to live here	N	54	12	15	81	1.50
	%	67,86	14,29	17,86	100	
2.If I didn't have to, I wouldn't live here, I would migrate elsewhere.	N	21	6	57	84	2.43
	%	25,00	7,14	67,86	100	
3.I trust my neighbours and friends.	N	60	24	0	84	1.29
	%	71,43	28,57	0,00	100	
4.I am a member of an agricultural cooperative.	N	21	63	0	84	2.50
	%	25,00	75,00	0,00	100	
5.I have a non-agricultural cooperative membership.	N	18	0	66	84	2.57
	%	21,43	0,00	78,57	100	
6.I am not interested in organizations such as associations, cooperatives or unions.	N	60	24	0	84	1.57
	%	71,43	28,57	0,00	100	
7. I consult the District Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry for the information that I need.	N	18	12	54	84	2.43
	%	21,43	14,29	64,29	100	
8.I ask my friends for the information I need while doing my work.	N	81	3	0	84	1.04
	%	96,43	3,57	0,00	100	
9.I generally trust people around me.	N	63	21	0	84	1.25
	%	75,00	25,00	0,00	100	
10.I think it is necessary to be careful and prudent in dealing with people.	N	84	0	0	84	1.00
	%	100,00	0,00	0,00	100	

Georg Wiesinger (Social capital in rural development, 2017) applied a modified scale on social capital with was first developed by the EU Commission (2005) for measuring social capital in three Austrian case study regions (Papneukirchen in Upper Austria, Thomasberg and Neidling both in Lower Austria).

The EU enlargement to ten new member States in 2004 implied challenges in regional integration for which the development of social capital might have become essential. In this context of heightened awareness of people's values and day-to-day interaction, the DG Employment and Social Affairs was interested in measuring the level of social capital networks in the European Union and in two candidate countries (Bulgaria and Romania). For this purpose, 25.978 interviews were conducted in total in all member states between November and December 2004. The findings were published in a special report and give a denoted overview on the situation of social capital across all EU member states. The main determinants were put down in six chapters: (i) personal satisfaction with main social, economic and political domains as well as satisfaction with personal fields; (ii) trust and socialization: generalized trust and informal socialization (time spent in socializing with friends, neighbors and work colleagues); (iii) informal social capital; (iv) networks and associational activities; (v) social capital and political and civic commitment and finally (vi) care of elderly.

This closed rating-scaled questionnaire comprises 150 items on quality of life, satisfaction with life infrastructures and the natural environment, safety, discrimination, commitments to civil society and local associations, social networks and interaction, etc. and also personal data (gender, age, education, profession etc.).

The Eurobarometer questionnaire was translated into German and slightly modified. Questions on mobile and computer use were important in 2004 but did not differentiate any more between social groups in 2017. So, these were left out. On the other hand, some questions on the situation of local government and the state of local democracy which had not originally been part of the EU Eurobarometer questionnaire were integrated.

Unlike in the Turkish study (Giray 2021), there were no face-to-face interviews. But hard-copy questionnaires were distributed to all community residents entitled to vote (age over 16 years) by the municipality administration or other well-known village members. This also enhanced the confidence and the participation rate of the survey. The questionnaires were recollected from the residences of the community members after one week. Or people could also deliver their questionnaires to the municipality office by themselves with a given time.

Table 2-2: Example: chi-squared analysis on life satisfaction (Pabneukirchen, Austria). Source: Wiesinger (2017)

Satisfaction	Gender m/f	Age ≤ 29/≥30	retired Y/N	Education high/low	Voluntary work Y/N	Agr. Occup. Y/N	polit. Eng. Y/N
your current job	0,012	0,114	+++	0,199 ***	0,161	-0,121 *	0,047
own health	-0,012	0,203***	-0,274 ***	0,140 *	0,121	-0,081	-0,016
your personal safety	0,032	0,094	-0,153 *	0,131 *	0,141 *	-0,076	0,062
your home, housing	-0,010	-0,044	-0,035	0,044	0,203 ***	-0,148 **	0,046
relationship people working with	0,015	-0,007	+++	0,211 *	0,138	-0,046	-0,031
social Life	-0,011	0,093	0,041	0,125 *	0,132 **	-0,094	0,006
family Life	0,087	-0,022	-0,068	0,146 *	0,165 **	-0,137 *	0,001
your life in general	0,011	0,040 *	0,001	0,165 **	0,051 *	-0,152 ~	-0,113 *
neighborhood	0,048	-0,012	0,042	0,014	0,100	-0,035	0,086
air quality	0,098	0,028	-0,083	0,057	0,128 *	-0,039	0,046
financial situation	0,001	-0,067	0,049	0,152 *	0,144 **	-0,089	0,063
democracy in your community	-0,060	0,039	0,021	0,010 *	0,055	-0,104	0,091
democracy in Austria	-0,019	-0,031	0,058	0,047	0,114 *	-0,121	0,167 **
democracy in the EU	-0,095	0,097	-0,095	0,125 *	0,129 **	-0,021	0,120 *

Finally, the results were analyzed by chi-squared test and correlation analyses by the researchers. The findings display the state and distribution of social capital across gender, different social, age and professional groups.

General knowledge about the fabric of local rural social capital is a prerequisite and basic requirement for special tailored and successful rural development strategies. Social capital investigations on local and/or regional level are indispensable and should be carried out in advance of the determination of development programs.

3 BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL CAPITAL GENERATION

This chapter provides eight examples of regional or local initiatives that contribute to the strengthening of social capital in rural regions in Austria (3.1-3.2), Spain (3.3-3.4), Portugal (3.5-3.6), and Turkey (3.7-3.8). The chapters follow a similar structure, offering insights into the regions, the prerequisites for social capital, project details, and the impact of these initiatives in their respective regions. Each chapter also includes a table highlighting factors that promote or hinder the establishment of the described initiatives. This information is intended to inspire and assist readers in considering possibilities and constraints when implementing similar initiatives or specific aspects of them in their professional contexts.

Chapter 3.1 introduces five initiatives aimed at developing the Inn-Salzach-EUREGIO, a rural region in Austria bordering Germany. These initiatives focus on creating a competitive and attractive region with a high quality of life, promoting the economy, employment, cultural and living spaces, and enhancing the competitiveness of the Innviertel-Hausruck region through cross-border cooperation. Many of these projects explicitly target social networks and the strengthening of local social capital. Chapter 3.2 describes how a Local Action Group (LAG) of the EU LEADER program addresses regional challenges such as outmigration and the shortage of skilled workers in Vorarlberg, the easternmost state of Austria. This involves facilitating specific training courses and promoting volunteer work through pilot and full project phases. In Chapter 3.3, the Fraimon program in southern Spain emerges from the efforts of six small-scale farmers determined to counteract the decline of such farms in rural Spain. They establish the Fraimon cooperative to improve the marketing and sale of agricultural products, address environmental and labor challenges, and promote employment generation in rural areas. Chapter 3.4 focuses on the Huete Futuro Foundation, which is dedicated to preserving the cultural and natural heritage of a small Spanish town. The foundation mobilizes more than 350 people and has made significant progress in restoring the town's architectural heritage, setting an example for other towns in Castilla-La Mancha. The Wines of Alentejo Sustainability Program (WASP) is discussed in Chapter 3.5, showcasing its efforts to implement sustainability standards in the wine production sector in Alentejo, Portugal. This program, initially public-funded, now boasts over 450 members working to enhance economic, social, and environmental sustainability through quantitative indicators. Chapter 3.6 presents a successful example of a multisectoral cooperative in southern Portugal, the Cooperativa Integral Minga. This cooperative supports agriculture, commercialization, housing, construction, and services, with the aim of promoting sustainable development and providing assistance to similar initiatives. The last two chapters shift the focus to agricultural cooperatives in rural Turkey, specifically Agricultural Development Cooperatives (ADCs). These cooperatives, established under Cooperative Law No. 1163 in 1965, aimed to address workforce emigration and rural development. While their numbers have grown, the commitment of members has waned, affecting their effectiveness. Chapter 3.7 introduces the Bademli Nursery Agricultural Development Cooperative in Izmir province, emphasizing its commitment to cooperation in all aspects of its activities and member participation since 1968. Chapter 3.8 discusses the

Kümbet Agricultural Development Cooperative, established in 2004 and legally founded in 2006 in Eskişehir province. With 197 members, this cooperative primarily focuses on improving milk production through enhanced marketing. These initiatives serve as valuable examples of how social capital can be strengthened in diverse rural regions, providing insights and inspiration for readers to consider similar approaches in their own professional contexts.

3.1 AUSTRIA (I) THE INN-SALZACH-EUREGIO - DEVELOPING A REGION *(GEORG WIESINGER AND THERESIA OEDL-WIESER)*

3.1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Inn-Salzach-EUREGIO was established in 1994 to promote cross-border cooperation between the respective regions in Austria and Bavaria, Germany. The Inn-Salzach-EUREGIO Regional Management Innviertel-Hausruck association was founded to oversee the operational implementation of this partnership. Its primary objective is to develop a competitive and appealing region with a high quality of life, stimulate economic growth, increase employment opportunities, enhance cultural and living spaces, and bolster the overall competitiveness of the Innviertel-Hausruck region while keeping cross-border cooperation in mind.

As a collaborative partner of Regional Management Upper Austria, a limited liability company, Inn-Salzach-EUREGIO ensures that all services provided by Regional Management are accessible free of charge to all members of the Inn-Salzach-EUREGIO within the region. It functions as both a project promoter and a financing partner. Importantly, many of the regional projects and initiatives initiated by Inn-Salzach-EUREGIO explicitly focus on strengthening social networks and enhancing local social capital.

3.1.2 REGION

The Inn-Salzach-EUREGIO was established as a non-profit association in 1994, and it includes 134 municipalities from the districts of Braunau, Grieskirchen, Ried, and Schärding in the western part of Upper Austria. Given its proximity to the German Province of Bavaria, the region also engages in cross-border activities that involve neighboring Bavarian counties such as Passau, Rottal-Inn, Altötting, Mühldorf, and Traunstein through INTERREG Projects.

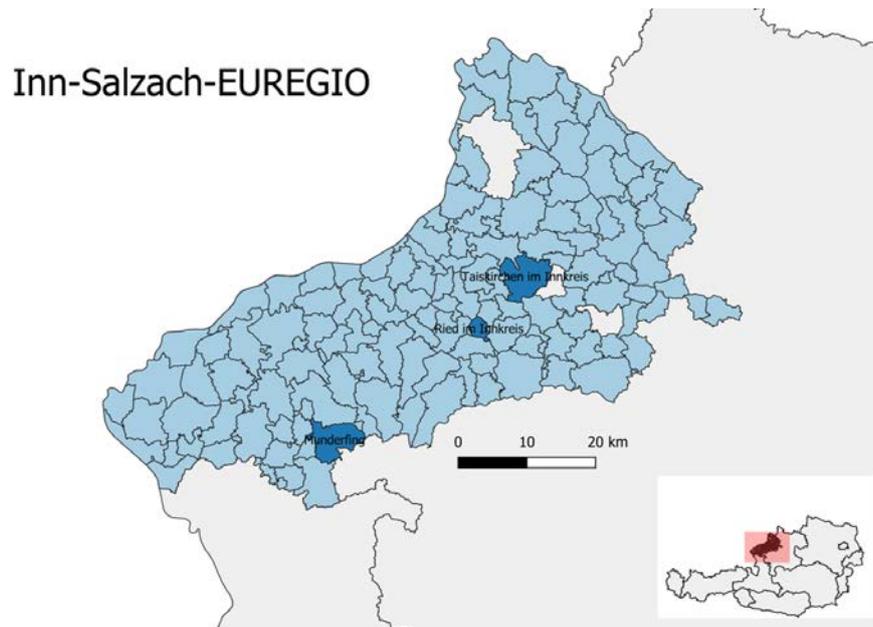


Figure 3-1
*The location of the Inn-Salzach-EUREGIO in Upper Austria
 (Municipalities in dark blue will be presented in this study case) (BAB, 2021).*

The entire region covers an area of 2,593.12 km², which accounts for 21.64% of the total land area of Upper Austria. It has a population of 263,509 individuals, representing 17.61% of the population of Upper Austria (Statistics Austria, 2021). The population density in the region is 101.6 persons per km², which is notably lower than the OECD typology limit for rural municipalities (150 persons per km², OECD Directorate for Public Governance and Territorial Development, June 2011). The territorial landscape of the region is diverse, ranging from the fertile agricultural flatlands along the Inn River catchment in the west to low mountain ranges (such as the Hausruck and Sauwald) with elevations of approximately 900 meters above sea level in the east and north. Agriculture plays a prominent role in the region, characterized by a significant portion of grassland and arable land, as well as a thriving animal husbandry sector, including cattle, dairy production, and pig farming.

The region's economic and administrative focal points are two smaller towns: Braunau, with a population of 17,400 inhabitants, and Ried im Innkreis, with 12,200 inhabitants. Over time, the study region has transformed from being primarily agriculture-driven into one of the fastest-growing industrial areas in Austria. It is now home to significant industries in food processing, vehicle and machinery manufacturing, and trading companies. Notable companies in the region include KTM AG, known for motorcycle production, AMAG Ranshofen, the largest company in the Austrian aluminum industry sector, and FACC AG, which manufactures advanced aircraft components and systems for the global aerospace industry.

3.1.3 PRECONDITIONS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN THIS REGION

According to Bourdieu (1986) and Putnam (2000), social capital encompasses the effective functioning of social groups through interpersonal relationships, a shared sense of identity, a common understanding, shared norms and values, trust, cooperation, and reciprocity. The cross-border Inn-Salzach EUREGIO, which borders Bavarian regions, was established just before Austria's accession to the EU. It was built upon the foundation of four LEADER action groups, forming the basis for nearly three decades of intensive local cooperation among various stakeholders. The overarching goal of Inn-Salzach EUREGIO is to develop the cross-border region into a vibrant living and working space for its residents. This involves strengthening a sense of identity, preserving the natural environment, improving the quality of life in the region, and promoting cultural activities (European Commission, 2015). The LEADER approach has proven successful in mobilizing local resources and capitalizing on development opportunities in many rural regions across Europe. A key aspect of LEADER is its bottom-up approach, which prioritizes building social capital and fostering social innovation in rural areas. Since its inception, it has placed a strong emphasis on enhancing connections and encouraging participatory methods, garnering significant interest from both policymakers and local stakeholders (Dax et al., 2016).

3.1.4 PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

3.1.4.1 INTENTION

The Inn-Salzach EUREGIO Regional Management Innviertel-Hausruck (RM) is actively promoting a wide array of rural development initiatives. These include cross-border collaborations with Bavaria, supported by INTERREG Austria-Bavaria, as well as partnerships between small towns and their surrounding municipalities. The RM collaborates with local and regional stakeholders to establish common objectives, strategies, and pilot projects. For instance, they work on initiatives to encourage sustainable local mobility and enhance settlement structures to reduce land consumption, with funding support from EFRE-IWB. The overarching goal is to fortify environmental networks and promote multimodal everyday mobility through a more efficient, environmentally friendly, and socially responsible approach to transportation. This also involves raising awareness about mobility-related issues. Additionally, Inn-Salzach EUREGIO-backed initiatives aim for comprehensive sustainable development, spanning social, economic, and environmental dimensions. They focus on energy efficiency, eco-friendly urban planning, ecotourism, and the preservation of natural and cultural landscapes. Another significant focus of RM involves fostering inter-municipal and regional cooperation among municipalities, businesses, and social partners to enhance regional competitiveness. This often includes the development of regional adaptation strategies.

A crucial aspect of Inn-Salzach EUREGIO's mission, vital for both territorial and social cohesion, is the strengthening of social capital. This involves cultivating social networks, promoting social inclusion, and supporting grassroots initiatives to enhance the quality of

life in the region. Addressing challenges related to demographic changes, volunteer engagement, and empowerment are vital components of this effort. These challenges are tackled through Agenda 21 and LEADER projects, with a particular emphasis on countering the emigration of talent from rural areas. The involvement and active participation of local and regional stakeholders and citizens in bottom-up processes aimed at developing future strategies, tailored to the specific needs of the community in an environmentally, socio-culturally, and economically sustainable manner, represent a forward-thinking approach in the region.

3.1.4.2 DESCRIPTION OF INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS

In the upcoming chapters, we provide detailed descriptions of five initiatives within the Inn-Salzach EUREGIO and their notable impact on social capital. These initiatives and projects cover a wide range of topics, all driven by the common purpose of promoting social cohesion, sustainability objectives, and civic engagement. Through these initiatives, local and regional social capital can be further enriched and expanded.

(1) Citizen Participation in Munderfing

Munderfing, situated in the southern part of the Inn-Salzach EUREGIO, serves as an exemplary case of citizen participation, civic engagement, and the strengthening of social capital. Historically a predominantly rural area, Munderfing has transformed into a significant business hub over the past two decades. Its population has grown from 2,000 inhabitants in 1950 to over 3,000 in 2020, accompanied by a corresponding increase in jobs and companies. In 1981, the municipality had 424 jobs within 75 companies, while in 2020, these numbers had risen to 2,435 jobs within 183 companies. Local community tax revenues have also increased tenfold compared to the year 2000 (Municipality Munderfing, 2021).

The key driver behind this success is the implementation of a community-based citizen participation model. Under the guidance of an external institute and with financial support from Agenda 21, village residents were encouraged to actively engage in shaping their community's development. This initiative has not only inspired the community but has also led to the execution of specific exemplary projects since 1998 (Municipality Munderfing, 2021).

Citizen Participation Grid

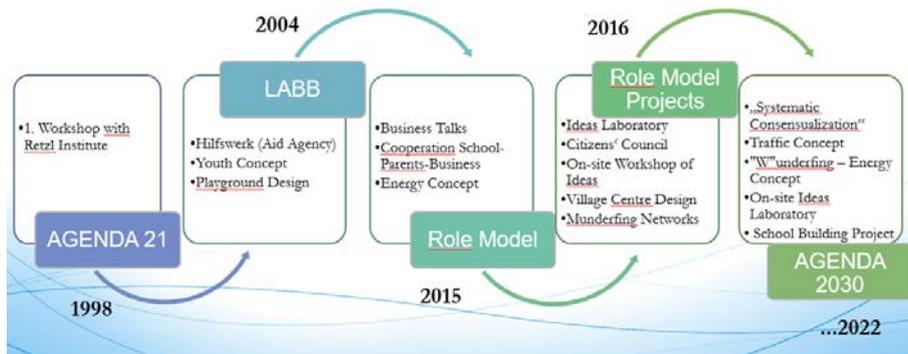


Figure 3-2

Model of citizen participation in the municipality Munderfing, Upper Austria (RM, Munderfing, 2021).

As a result of an extensive civic participation process that spanned over a year in 2005, a local energy concept aimed at transitioning to renewable energy sources was initiated and successfully executed by 2014. The "energy group" comprised representatives from diverse backgrounds, including local businesses (builders, bank directors, roofers, electricians, plumbers), farmers, educators, inventors, politicians, and members of the public administration. By 2035, the entire energy demand of the municipality will be met through renewable energy sources generated by a wind farm equipped with five turbines. Notably, this wind farm represents the first instance where an Austrian municipality owns the majority stake and was promoted through a unique form of citizen participation. The municipality holds a 75.2 percent ownership stake in the wind farm. These five turbines collectively produce 32 million kWh of electricity annually, catering to approximately 10,000 households. This wind farm has also led to the development of new services and the creation of jobs in the region. Another noteworthy initiative involves the formulation of a "Future Profile for 2015-2025," undertaken within the framework of Agenda 21. The process commenced with an "ideas laboratory" in January 2014, where initial ideas were gathered and laid the foundation for future planning and development.



Figure 3-3

Ideas lab to collect initial ideas for a creative location in January 2014 in the Municipality Munderfing, Upper Austria (Source: Municipality Munderfing, 2021).

A "Village Council" was established as a collaborative working group, bringing together representatives from various political parties, municipal administration personnel, members of local cultural and sports associations, church members, entrepreneurs, schoolteachers, farmers, ordinary citizens from all walks of life and age groups, as well as newcomers from other regions who have chosen to make Munderfing their home.



Figure 3-4

Citizens village Council in January 2014 in the Municipality Munderfing (Source: Municipality Munderfing, 2021).

The Village Council's efforts culminated in a proposal for the revitalization of the village center, which was unveiled to the public in 2015. Over the following years, additional initiatives were initiated, encouraged, and supported by the Village Council. In 2018, the "Seminar House and Co-working Space Bräu" was inaugurated. This project involved the municipality leasing an inn that had been vacant for an extended period from its owner. The space was then transformed into an event center and co-working facility, serving local businesses and startups. Additionally, starter apartments were created to accommodate young individuals searching for housing.

Looking towards the future, the "Campus Munderfing" project envisions the construction of a new elementary school and the renovation of the existing secondary school, which is still in the planning phase. Teachers, students, and parents' associations have the opportunity to contribute their ideas and commitment, working collaboratively with the school committee and the local council of the municipality to shape the project's direction.



Figure 3-5
Discussion in a class room on the “Campus Munderfing”
(Source: Municipality Munderfing, 2021).

Finally, addressing the need for regionwide broadband expansion has been a significant priority. Approximately 64,000 meters of glass fiber cables have been laid, connecting 550 customers out of a potential 1,000 customers as of 2021. This expansion has provided local residents and businesses with access to high-speed broadband internet.

(2) Open Network Workshop Innviertel

The Open Network Workshop Innviertel operates as an association and serves as a communal meeting place, fostering an environment of creativity, recreation, and leisure. The primary focus of this initiative is on learning and social exchange, welcoming individuals interested in a wide range of activities, not limited solely to technical pursuits. The term "open" underscores the principle of free access for all, emphasizing a strong community-oriented approach with the primary goal of cultivating social networks and social capital. The open workshop encompasses a FabLab (Fabrication Laboratory), a wood workshop, and a locksmith's shop. The FabLab is equipped with a diverse array of flexible, computer-controlled tools capable of handling various length scales and materials. The goal is to enable the creation of "almost anything," including technology-enabled products typically associated with mass production. In this workshop, individuals have the opportunity to bring their own projects to life, fostering a sense of empowerment and innovation. The Open Network Workshop Innviertel also hosts meetings, workshops, and training sessions catering to both children and adults, covering a broad spectrum of topics. There is a specific focus on collaboration with kindergartens and schools, effectively extending the

educational experience beyond traditional boundaries. The older generation is actively encouraged to share their traditional knowledge, life experiences, and expertise in handicrafts within the network workshop. This valuable knowledge transfer ensures its preservation for future generations, contributing to the sustainability of these skills and insights.



Figure 3-6
Training in the Open Network Workshop Innviertel (Source: Municipality Munderfing, 2021).

In this context, the Network Workshop can be regarded as a central hub that exerts a profoundly positive impact on the economic, social, cultural, and political fabric not only within the community of Munderfing but also in neighboring municipalities and beyond.

This initiative specifically targets residents, particularly young individuals aged 6-14, providing them with a meeting space and a platform for social interaction. Participants receive training and skills that can prove invaluable in securing employment in nearby industries, such as the KTM motorcycle production works, which happens to be the largest company in the region. People of all age groups have the opportunity to nurture their creativity and build robust social networks. Through their engagement in the workshop, along with other interested community members, they experience civic involvement and solidarity, fostering essential social structures like cooperation, trust, tolerance, responsibility, and interconnectedness. These patterns of social capital are cultivated through everyday practice.

For young people, this initiative plays a crucial role in stemming the out-migration trend. Through practical engagement in the Network Workshop, residents also gain a deeper understanding and heightened awareness of environmental and social sustainability by participating in social exchanges within the workshop. They are more inclined to engage in local decision-making processes, recognizing that they can initiate new initiatives and drive change within their communities. This feature is vital for building democracy and political empowerment. Additionally, the vibrancy of associational life, exemplified by the multitude of recreational and cultural associations in the municipality of Munderfing, is a strong indicator of social capital. Sustaining this vibrancy relies on having a substantial number of

well-skilled, primarily young individuals who actively contribute to economic, social, political, and cultural spheres. Local industries benefit by attracting and recruiting well-trained young talent from within the region, while young people feel a stronger incentive to remain in the area or even start their own businesses.

The Open Network Workshop Innviertel also keeps pace with new developments and challenges. In March 2020, during the initial weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic, a "village university" was established. This innovative initiative connects municipalities and organizations via video conferences to regularly exchange views on current topics and challenges and collaboratively develop regional solutions. One of the most intense discussions revolved around climate change.

(3) TRAFOS – Giesserei – House of Sustainability

The association and cooperative TRAFOS, founded in 2018 in Ried im Innkreis, actively support sustainable lifestyles based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Employing a bottom-up approach and a concept of civic engagement, TRAFOS contributes to knowledge transfer, raises awareness, and promotes a sustainably oriented economy through events, media outreach, and networking. Its mission is to connect and assist individuals, organizations, and enterprises committed to thinking and acting sustainably.



Figure 3-7

House of sustainability "Giesserei" in Ried, Upper Austria (Source: TRAFOS, 2021).

TRAFOS has established a "house of sustainability" known as the "Giesserei" in the city of Ried im Innkreis. This remarkable initiative involved the renovation of a 700-year-old building, formerly a foundry, with an environmentally friendly approach that exclusively employed sustainable materials, such as insulation materials made from wool and other sustainable sources. The Giesserei officially opened its doors in May 2021 and has since become a central hub for sustainable activities and a meeting place for local residents.



Figure 3-8

Shop inside the “Gießerei” in Ried, Upper Austria (Picture by L. Bauchinger).

The Giesserei offers a range of amenities, including a co-working space, an OTELO (open technology laboratory), function rooms, retail spaces, an organic/regional bistro, and shops. It serves as a gathering point where people can come together, learn about environmental sustainability, build social connections, and foster a sense of responsibility towards society. This endeavor is a powerful indicator of the strengthening of social capital within the community.

In May 2019, TRAFOS organized a two-day fair known as INN-FAIR 2019. This event saw participation from over 70 exhibitors who showcased their products, services, and ideas. In addition to the exhibition, various workshops and events were conducted to promote mutual exchange, particularly within the realm of FoodCoops in the region. TRAFOS has established strong connections with the FoodCoop "GuaT" in Taiskirchen im Innkreis, and cooperative members from GuaT collaborate closely with TRAFOS.

(4) FoodCoop GuaT Taiskirchen im Innkreis

The FoodCoop GuaT Taiskirchen was established in 2015 and operates on a voluntary, unpaid commitment basis. Currently, 44 small-scale agricultural producers supply sustainably and organically produced regional food to 130 households. The product range offered by the FoodCoop is extensive, contingent upon seasonal availability and other factors like slaughtering dates, among others. Members have access to a selection of approximately 450 different products, covering around 80% of their daily grocery needs through the FoodCoop's offerings.



Figure 3-9
*Products of the FoodCoop GuaT, Taufkirchen,
Upper Austria (Source: GuaT, 2021).*



Figure 3-10
Logo of FoodCoop GuaT.

Members of the FoodCoop GuaT Taiskirchen can place their product orders weekly until Tuesday midnight through an online shop specifically designed for FoodCoops. On Fridays, farmers deliver the ordered products to a designated collection room in a school building. Members participate in both the distribution and collection of products at this location. Payment transactions are conducted cashlessly via member accounts. In addition to providing ethically and sustainably sourced food, the FoodCoop GuaT enhances the relationship between producers and consumers. A significant part of their activities is dedicated to raising awareness, promoting knowledge transfer (e.g., through excursions, farm visits, workshops, and cooking classes), and supporting small-scale farming in the region.

(5) **MULTILOCALITY** in different phases of the life cycle as an opportunity for the Innviertel-Hausruck Region

An Agenda 21 project has been implemented with a focus on regional initiatives and intermediary structures within the EUREGIO Innviertel-Hausruck. The primary goal is to raise awareness about multilocality and to advance rural-urban connections and synergies. The concept of multilocality centers on the various phases of the life cycle. People may leave their regions and return later, perhaps after a few years or upon retirement, or they may maintain a dual residence between regions without entirely severing ties with their place of origin. This situation can be mutually beneficial for both the regions and the individuals involved. The project aims to address several key issues:

1. Stakeholders in the Innviertel-Hausruck region gain an understanding of multilocality and the specific needs of multilocal individuals, recognizing this lifestyle as a crucial opportunity for regional development.
2. The needs of multilocal individuals in three distinct life cycle phases—young adulthood, second move, and retirement—are analyzed. Recommendations for action are derived and tested in pilot municipalities.
3. A robust network involving and catering to multilocal individuals emerges in the Innviertel-Hausruck region, supporting the multilocal lifestyle sustainably and serving as a coordinating hub.

The Agenda 21 project "MULTILOCALITY in different phases of the life cycle as an opportunity for the Innviertel-Hausruck Region" invites multilocal individuals and target groups to participate in the project, engaging in various network and working meetings to promote rural-urban multilocal lifestyles, which are becoming increasingly important. Workshops employed the personas method to vividly illustrate the various facets of the multilocal lifestyle in a video format. Personas are fictitious but concrete representations of target users, created to represent different user types that may use services, products, sites, or brands in a similar manner. This method helps designers understand users' needs, experiences, behaviors, and goals.

The project has also generated important ideas, such as the establishment of co-working spaces in Vienna and Ried im Innkreis, which were implemented in 2020-2021. The manager of "Kipferlhaus" in Vienna, who was born in Ried im Innkreis, initiated the first Agenda 21 thematic laboratory, "multilocal WORKING," in Vienna. "Kipferlhaus" is a well-known coworking space and shared office in Vienna, located in one of the oldest buildings dating back to the 12th century. Using design thinking methodology, participants planned co-working spaces tailored to the requirements of a multilocal lifestyle, addressing issues such as how to use the co-working space, room furnishings, potential development, and services.

The second Agenda 21 thematic laboratory took place in Ried im Innkreis. With the results from both thematic laboratories, temporary "home bases" for multilocals and commuting co-workers from Vienna and Upper Austria were created in Vienna and Ried im Innkreis. By involving and facilitating the exchange of multilocal individuals, social and symbolic capital in the Inn-Salzach EUREGIO can be strengthened, and a stronger connection to the region of origin can be cultivated.

3.1.4.3 PROMOTING AND HINDERING FACTORS ENCOUNTERED IN THE INITIATIVES

The development of social capital is not a straightforward journey, and there are both challenges and obstacles that must be considered when initiating projects to strengthen civic engagement in the Inn-Salzach EUREGIO. Promoting and hindering factors experienced in the above-presented projects are summarized in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1: Promoting and hindering factors for strengthening social capital in Inn-Salzach EUREGIO

Promoting factors (+)	Hindering factors (-)
Involvement of a broad range of population can be achieved by community-based citizen participation.	It is difficult to involve all groups of the population. The existing distribution of power tends to exclude social fringe groups.
“Village councils” and “ideas laboratories” foster civic engagement and a feeling of belonging to a site.	The democratic legitimacy of randomized councils may be doubted in comparison to elected bodies.
The joint development of future profiles enhances the reception of measures applied.	There are still different political points of views leading to conflicts.
Open workshop networks act as a hub for training, formation, social inclusion and the creation of employment.	Open workshops networks are not always unanimously supported by the governance since they cannot be controlled so easily.
Vacant buildings can be transformed into places for knowledge transfer, awareness raising and the promotion of a sustainably orientated economy. This is driven by volunteer work and made possible by alternative forms of funding.	Such large-scale projects, also in financial terms, require a lot of commitment. Different approaches and views of things can cause conflicts - for example between older and younger activists.
Food cooperatives not only safeguard regional food distribution under fair conditions but also create social networks, trust and civic connectedness	It is a big challenge to socially include poorer people because food prices are usually higher.

3.1.5 REGIONAL EMBEDDEDNESS

Nearly three decades of experience with intra-regional and cross-border cooperation in the Inn-Salzach EUREGIO have produced positive outcomes for the economic and social development of the case study region. The presented projects are deeply integrated into the region and address topics that enhance the quality of life for the local population, encourage community engagement, and foster future prospects for the region. Additionally, individuals with multilocal backgrounds, originating from the region, are actively engaged in these projects, contributing their experiences and expertise to regional development processes within the Inn-Salzach EUREGIO.

3.1.6 GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Inn-Salzach EUREGIO is composed of four districts and 134 municipalities. It was established in the mid-1990s with the goal of enhancing competitiveness within the European Union in collaboration with the neighboring region of Bavaria. The EUREGIO's board consists of 28 representatives from various entities, including municipalities, district authorities, interest groups, political parties, and LEADER regions. The operational execution of the EUREGIO's tasks is managed by the Regional Management Hausruck-Innviertel (RM).

One of the challenges faced by the EUREGIO is to create synergies in inter-municipal and regional development projects that benefit all of its member municipalities. Beyond establishing an appropriate institutional framework, it's essential to build the capacities and awareness of the actors involved so that they can approach these complex governance processes with open-mindedness. As an intermediary institution, RM plays a crucial role at the intersection of planning, politics, management, and regional steering of participatory processes. They operate within a political and institutional multi-level system, navigating between top-down requirements and bottom-up networking.

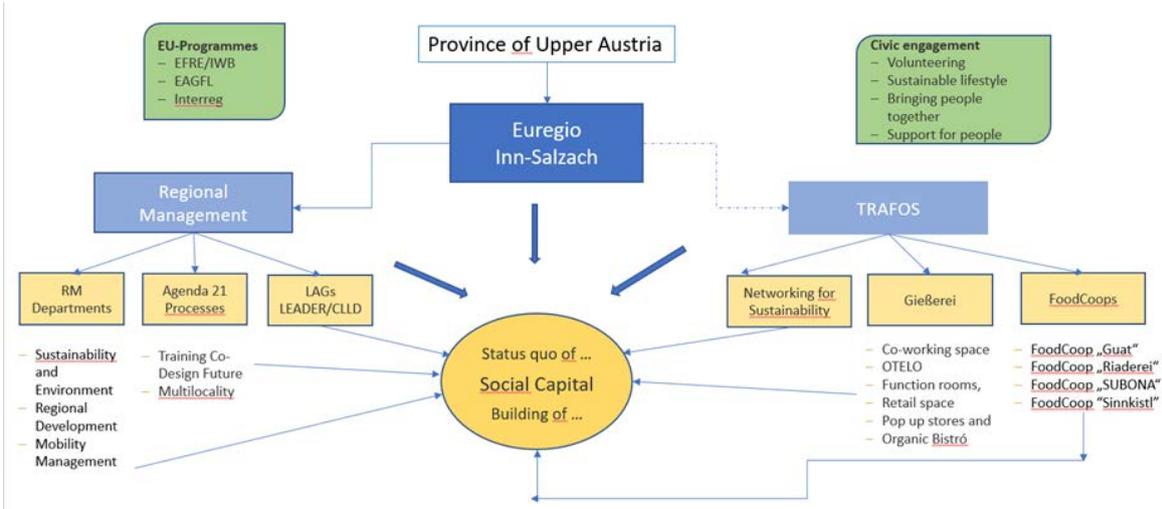


Figure 3-11
 Governance arrangement of the Inn-Salzach EUREGIO by example of the initiative TRAFOS
 (Source: Own illustration, BAB, 2021).

RM Hausruck-Innviertel serves as a service-oriented organization that fulfills several roles, including idea generation, advisory services, moderation, and promotion of regional development processes. It has a cross-sectional function, spanning various sector policies, and is also implementation-oriented when it comes to managing development projects. RM actively secures funding from provincial, national, and EU levels to support the implementation of regional and international projects.

The organization is deeply rooted in the region, having built trust through years of intensive cooperation and open communication on equal terms. Figure 10 illustrates the governance structure of the Inn-Salzach EUREGIO, where Agenda 21 processes and LEADER projects hold significant importance. As the presented projects demonstrate, considerable efforts

are being made to involve people in rural development processes and to enhance the quality of life in the region. These efforts contribute to strengthening the sense of identity with the region and bolstering social capital.

3.1.7 PUBLIC SUPPORTS (LOCAL GOVERNMENTS/NATIONAL POLICIES)

In the Inn-Salzach EUREGIO, a variety of funding sources are tapped into for regional development projects. These include European Union funding instruments such as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) for LEADER initiatives. Additionally, there is funding available at the national level and from the province of Upper Austria that is leveraged for various projects. The Regional Management (RM) Hausruck-Innviertel plays a crucial role in supporting and guiding project promoters through the process of submitting and implementing projects. They provide expertise and assistance to ensure that projects are well-prepared and effectively executed. Moreover, the Inn-Salzach EUREGIO has small project funds in place to facilitate the financing of initiatives. These funds are accessible to a wide range of entities, including municipalities, companies, associations, and private initiatives, making it possible for various stakeholders to submit project proposals.

3.1.8 SOCIAL CAPITAL BUILDING: CONCLUDING REMARKS

Social capital is undoubtedly a valuable asset for fostering development in rural areas. However, its effectiveness is closely tied to the prevailing economic, socio-cultural, and environmental conditions. As Putnam (2000) aptly noted, an individual who is well-connected in a community that lacks broader connectivity may not achieve the same level of productivity as someone in a well-connected society. Even individuals with fewer personal connections can benefit from residing in a well-connected community. This observation underscores the limitations of social capital as a sole tool for rural development. In regions where the foundational conditions are unfavorable, social capital alone may not be sufficient to drive progress. Achieving development goals in such contexts often requires extraordinary efforts and additional support.

Simultaneously, it's crucial to recognize the immense value of social capital. A connected and well-networked society can more effectively promote rural development. In today's globalized and post-modern world, rural areas are experiencing significant transformations that impact their socio-economic fabric. Many of these changes, while offering advantages, can also have adverse effects on civic engagement. Modern technologies, such as television, mass communication, and the internet, have created a virtual neighborhood where individuals can access goods, entertainment, and information without traditional face-to-face networking. While this has its benefits, it can also lead to a reduction in local social interactions and a loss of opportunities for human connectedness.

Local social capital can indeed play a pivotal role in rural development. It enables the effective utilization of local resources, including both natural and human resources, through

the establishment of social networks, trust, and a sense of civic engagement. However, it's essential not to overestimate the influence of social capital. Like any tool, it has its limitations and potential negative aspects, such as the risk of exclusion or resistance to change.

3.2 AUSTRIA (II) REGIO-V – Região LEADER em Vorarlberg, Austria

3.2.1 INTRODUCTION

The "Regio-V" area represents a Local Action Group (LAG) operating within the framework of LEADER in Vorarlberg, Austria (Regio-V 2019). This LAG primarily focuses on addressing challenges in the rural areas of Vorarlberg, which include issues like outmigration, especially among young people, and a shortage of skilled workers. The Local Development Strategy for the years 2014-2020 (LDS) of the LEADER LAG is centered around the theme of "Vibrant Villages" and is designed to tackle these challenges. Additionally, the promotion of well-being and the establishment of structures that benefit the community at large are among the three guiding principles of the LDS.

For many years, the province of Vorarlberg has placed significant emphasis on volunteer work, offering specific training courses and providing insurance coverage for volunteers (ÖAR & ZSI, 2019, 11). Drawing from experiences in the neighboring province of Tyrol, where volunteer work coordination at the local level has been successful, a pilot project was initially launched in the Regio-V area during the 2007-2013 funding period. Following this, the project "To be Committed" was initiated as a flagship project within the LDS of LEADER during the 2014-2021 funding period.

3.2.2 REGION

The Local Action Group (LAG) Regio-V was established in 2001 and represents a specific sub-region within Vorarlberg, the westernmost province of Austria. The name "Regio-V" stands for "Regionalentwicklung Vorarlberg," which translates to regional development in the state of Vorarlberg. This region has a relatively low population density, with only 42 inhabitants per square kilometer, in contrast to the central Rhine valley, which boasts a population density of 353 inhabitants per square kilometer. The case study area is primarily rural and is characterized by its topographical features, including side valleys of the River Rhine and the foothills of the Alps. The presence of the Rhine Valley conurbation and the Walgau area nearby creates a metropolitan region that extends into the adjacent Swiss Rhine Valley and the German side of Lake Constance. This larger metropolitan region is considered one of the most industrialized areas in Austria (Figure 3-12). While this proximity to urban centers offers opportunities, it also poses significant challenges for the LEADER area. The region must make considerable efforts to maintain socio-economic balance and local employment opportunities. High levels of outward migration and commuting are

common, and businesses and crafts enterprises in the LEADER area face difficulties in attracting and retaining suitable workers due to competition with the Rhine Valley.

The attractiveness of living in a rural area is closely tied to the availability of jobs and the strength of the local economy. Therefore, innovative strategies are needed in the region to facilitate access to labor for local businesses and enhance their competitiveness. The challenge is to implement initiatives that respect natural ecosystems and the cultural landscape. Sustainability concepts are also in demand, making rural areas well-suited for activities such as alpine winter tourism, as well as leisure and hiking tourism in the summer months. Collaboration between agriculture and tourism is of paramount importance, and rural areas have significant potential as local recreation destinations. As a result, key goals of Vorarlberg's regional development efforts include promoting regional economic cycles, diversifying agricultural and industrial production, fostering new partnerships, and striving for "Vibrant Villages" that make it more appealing for young families and skilled workers to choose to live in rural areas like Regio-V.

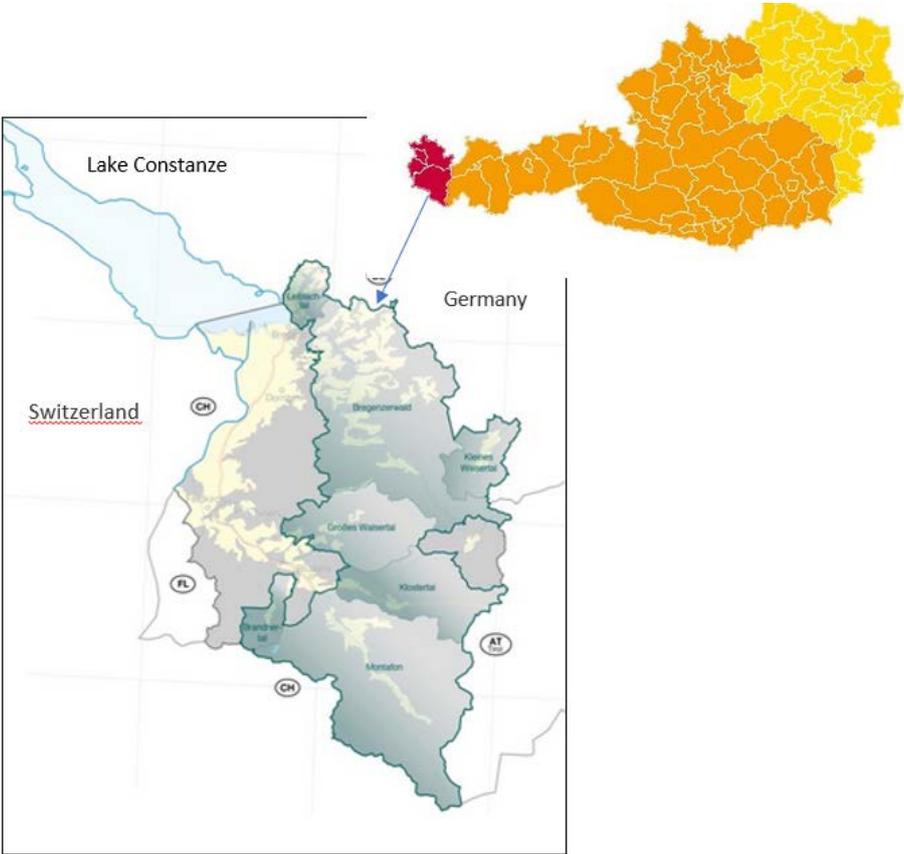


Figure 3-12
Location of the case study Region Regio-V, Province of Vorarlberg, Austria (Source: Regio-V, 2019).

The Regio-V area comprises several sub-regions or valleys, each with its own unique identity and history, such as Montafon, Klostertal, Brandnertal, Großes Walsertal, Bregenzerwald, and Leiblachtal. Unlike metropolitan areas, rural areas face challenges primarily related to declining birth rates, out-migration, and a lack of in-migration. These demographic changes

lead to lower utilization of educational infrastructure, labor shortages, and increased expenditure on elderly care.

Between 2002 and 2012, the population in the LEADER area of Regio-V grew by only 0.03%, while the metropolitan area in the Rhine Valley experienced a much higher population growth rate of 7.4% during the same period. However, in the last decade (2011-2021), population growth in Regio-V was more balanced, with a 4.8% increase, compared to 8.5% in the Rhine valley and 7.92% in the entire Vorarlberg region. The dynamic growth in the conurbation was driven by significant immigration from the valleys and abroad. This immigration has also contributed to Vorarlberg having a higher proportion of foreigners compared to the national average (Vorarlberg: 12.6%, Austria: 9.7%, Switzerland: 23%). Therefore, Regio-V aims to provide a compelling alternative for residents while taking advantage of opportunities offered by the nearby urban centers.

The development processes and priorities in Regio-V valleys differ in many aspects and have different alignments, as the following explanations show (Regio-V 2019, 3ff). The Leiblach Valley is a cross-border valley to Germany in the north of Vorarlberg, which is climatically favored by its proximity to Lake Constance (Figure 3-12). In the future, the Leiblach Valley will cooperate more closely with its Bavarian neighbors on the topic of preventive health care, which is also included as a measure in the LDS (ÖAR & ZSI 2019, 20f). This cooperation aims to revitalize the villages on the Austrian side of the Leiblach Valley.

The challenge of Bregenzerwald is the further development of a sustainable agricultural production, the promotion of sustainable tourism, and keeping skilled workers in Bregenzerwald to secure the businesses and the range of jobs. To counteract the shortage, organized immigration of skilled workers will be necessary. The targeted use of vacant buildings in the center of the villages should contribute to the further revitalization of Bregenzerwald villages of Bregenzerwald in the future.

The Great Walser Valley is a gorge-shaped valley in the eastern alpine limestone region with a distinctive mountain landscape, much of which is characterized by a cultural landscape. Mountain farming is the main or secondary occupation of many inhabitants. Tourism dominates at the end of the valley and at the transition to Bregenzerwald. Regional handicrafts have developed further in recent years through cooperation. The proportion of commuters in the workforce is predominant.

The Kleinwalsertal region is a member of the cross-border Regio-Via Salina. Several cross-border cooperation with Allgäu (DE) have developed in the meantime. The challenges are certainly in maintaining the tourism industry, in maintaining the quality of life in the villages, and in the question of migration. Klostertal with Stuben and its higher-lying municipalities Lech and Zürs developed in the 20th century into the cradle of alpine skiing, and the cultural heritage of ski culture continues to hold invaluable potential in terms of uniqueness. There are two Natura 2000 areas in the region, which is characterized by dairy farming. Of particular importance is the increasing number of overnight stays during the summer.

Brandnertal, a relatively small side valley with two communities (Bürserberg and Brand) became known through winter tourism in Brand. The challenge is to maintain the number

of overnight stays and to diversify in agriculture by intensifying the cooperation between agriculture and tourism.

The challenge in Montafon is to secure the tourism destination and fight against emigration. The settlement of businesses and the concern for the status of skilled workers counteract emigration. An important approach to increasing attractiveness is the valorization of the cultural landscape as an identity-forming element (Maisäß, museum landscape, mining, energy industry, alpinism).

3.2.3 PRECONDITIONS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN THIS REGION

Over the past 16 years, the implementation of the LEADER approach in Regio-V has had a profoundly positive impact on the region's development. This approach, characterized by its integrated bottom-up perspective, has allowed for highly customized responses to territorial and local challenges associated with structural change. It has successfully encouraged numerous municipalities to engage in comprehensive planning processes, mobilized innovative thinking, fostered a sense of personal responsibility, ignited entrepreneurial spirit, and positioned rural areas as attractive places to live.

One of the remarkable achievements of the LEADER approach in Regio-V has been its ability to promote a culture of cooperation through diverse participation in various projects. This approach has facilitated a significant learning process and the dissemination of moderation and communication methods that enhance participation. Notably, it has given rise to new collaborations in agriculture, tourism, crafts, and municipal cooperation, leading to the formation of new structures capable of actively pursuing their development independently. Examples include regional planning associations like the Biosphere Park, Kloostertal and Leiblachtal, the Bregenzerwald Tourism Association, Werkraum (a cooperative of 90 small businesses), Käsestrasse (an alpine dairies brand organization), and Biosphere Park Management, among others. These structures, nurtured through the LEADER program, serve as essential and self-driven foundations for regional development and bolstering regional resilience for the future.

Today, these established structures have evolved into organizations capable of initiating projects and independently implementing initiatives in line with the LEADER philosophy. A significant lesson learned from projects like "Engagement," which was executed during the 2007-2013 funding period, is that social engagement can indeed be mobilized within villages, provided there is a central point of contact for coordination. Additionally, new societal demands for volunteering continue to emerge, particularly in areas related to education, social services, inclusion, integration, youth and elder care, as well as culture. Building on the success of the "Engaged" project from a previous funding period, where civic engagement coordination was established in two local sites, the Local Action Group (LAG) decided to expand this initiative to a larger area in the subsequent LEADER funding period of 2014-2020.

3.2.4 PROJECT DESCRIPTION “TO BE COMMITTED”

3.2.4.1 INTENTION

The project "To be Committed" aims to enhance well-being, promote the common good, and strengthen societal resilience in Regio-V. This is achieved through the mobilization of civic engagement and volunteering. The primary objective of the project is to encourage increased interaction, social exchange, and mutual appreciation among residents while fostering a positive culture of relationships. When citizens in a municipality are willing to shoulder greater social responsibility and actively participate in volunteer activities, it has a profound impact on the local community.

Municipalities characterized by a high degree of civic participation tend to enjoy a higher quality of life, greater resident satisfaction with their place of residence, and increased innovative capacity to address societal and social challenges. Strategic volunteer coordination plays a pivotal role in unlocking the often-hidden potential of civic engagement within these municipalities. Additionally, there is a concerted effort to sensitize and motivate the younger generation to engage in civic and voluntary activities at the municipal level. Achieving this goal involves creating a societal environment where children and young people can grow up with authentic role models and suitable conditions that encourage active participation (Rüf, 2019).



Figure 3-13
Initiatives of the LEADER project “To be committed” in Regio-V, Vorarlberg, Austria (Regio-V, <https://www.regio-v.at/projects/8/engagiert-sein/>)

3.2.4.2 PARTICIPATING ACTORS AND INITIATION OF THE PROJECT

The project "To be Committed" targets four key groups: (i) Persons with potential for volunteer work: The project aims to identify and mobilize individuals who have untapped potential for volunteer engagement. Often, these individuals are willing to take on responsibilities and actively participate in community initiatives when given the opportunity. (ii) People with special needs: The project also focuses on individuals with specific support requirements, including those of varying ages, backgrounds, and abilities. By involving them in volunteer work, the project provides increased attention and support to address their unique needs and emergency situations promptly. (iii) Municipalities: Local communities and their residents directly benefit from the services provided by volunteers. Volunteer engagement is crucial for essential functions such as civil protection, social services, sports, and cultural activities within municipalities. It forms a strong foundation for social life and community development. (iv) Institutions and associations: Formal volunteering efforts by organizations, non-profits, and religious institutions are essential in the project. These entities contribute to the project's goals by offering their services and expertise within the community, complementing the efforts of individual volunteers.

In summary, "To be Committed" strives to enhance well-being, promote the common good, and bolster societal resilience in Regio-V by encouraging civic engagement and volunteering. This includes fostering social exchange, building connections, and nurturing a culture of relationships among residents. The project recognizes that civic engagement is a cornerstone of municipal life and provides a strong foundation for social cohesion and community development.

3.2.4.3 CONCEPT OF BEST PRACTICE

The origins of the "To be Committed" project trace back to 2008 when discussions between Lebenshilfe and the Zukunftsbüro Vorarlberg highlighted the pressing need for better social inclusion of disabled individuals in society. Inspired by an idea from Tyrol, the pilot project "Engagement" was introduced in two small areas within the Leiblach Valley and Bregenzerwald regions. Between 2009 and 2013, a series of small-scale projects and initiatives were implemented, enriching the social landscape in these areas and promoting the respectful utilization of local resources. These valuable experiences played a pivotal role in shaping the Local Development Strategy (LDS) of Regio-V for the 2014-2020 period, with the subsequent project "To be Committed" included as a lead project. In the years 2015-2018, the Regio-V manager assumed a leadership role in the development and execution of this cross-regional project, with 18 out of the 51 municipalities within Regio-V expressing interest and participation.

The overarching objective of the project was to demonstrate the potential of social capital when complemented by professional structures. "To be Committed" employed five volunteer coordinators responsible for mobilizing civic engagement across the 18 participating communities in Regio-V. These efforts aimed to effectively harness and enhance existing social capital within these communities over the long term. The primary

role of volunteer coordination encompassed identifying areas requiring action, locating interested citizens, inspiring, empowering, and guiding them in their volunteer commitments. By emphasizing personalized approaches, trust-building, and fostering personal relationships, volunteer coordination progressively encouraged and mobilized civic engagement. These coordinators also facilitated further training for newly engaged citizens and encouraged the exchange of experiences. Additionally, they ensured that the volunteer efforts of individuals were duly recognized and appreciated. This strategic volunteer coordination functioned as an interface for all voluntary engagement activities within a specific region and encompassed various responsibilities, including creating a sense of purpose, networking, guiding and supporting, recognizing potential, developing projects, finding innovative solutions for associations, promoting synergies, establishing favorable conditions, and serving as a local point of contact (Rüf, 2019).

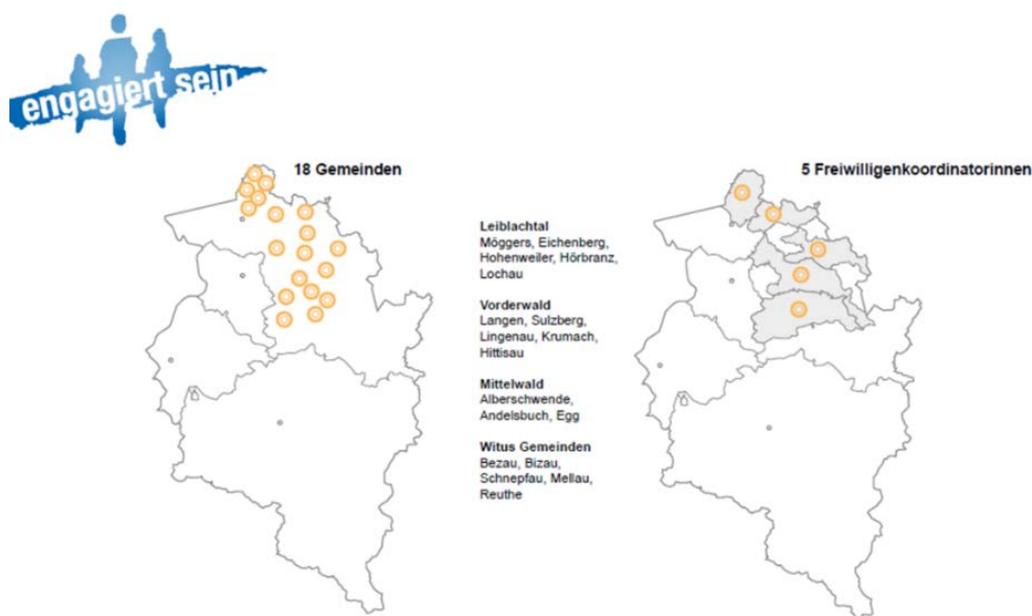


Figure 3-14

*18 municipalities and ranges of action of the five volunteer coordinators
(Source: ÖAR & ZSI (2019, 14))*

The primary operational objective of the project was to recruit a minimum of five volunteer coordinators to work in the five designated regions. These volunteer coordinators, in turn, were tasked with the mission of enticing individuals from the communities to engage in civic participation and facilitating the development of their social skills. Over the course of the project, a total of 850 individuals were mobilized for volunteer work, contributing a cumulative total of 26,800 hours. This collective effort had a positive impact on the lives of more than 6,000 people who benefited from these civic engagement initiatives. Within three years of project implementation, 110 initiatives and actions were initiated and guided by the volunteer coordinators. Below are some of the notable initiatives and projects from the "To be Committed" project (Rüf, 2019):

- Women's Café – A Meeting Point for Different Cultures;
- Walking Together – Fostering Integration in Daily Life;

- Healthy Neighborhood – Supporting New Families and Community Life;
- Learning Partnerships – Learning Mentors;
- Self-Help Office Alberschwende – Offering PC Courses for Refugees;
- Handarbeiten Miteinander Alberschwende – Teaching Women from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan to Sew and Promoting Interactions with Local Women;
- Initiative 60+ – Encouraging Retirees to Contribute to the Community;
- Visiting Time – Organizing Meetings that Enhance the Quality of Life.

In spring 2016, the volunteer coordinators underwent comprehensive training in "Volunteer Coordination and Volunteer Management" through a series of two-day modules, organized in collaboration with the Office for Future Issues. Thirteen startup workshops were conducted in the participating municipalities to assess the existing volunteer-related activities and engage regional stakeholders and interested citizens. Individual discussions with the mayors helped clarify the roles and responsibilities of the coordinators. The municipalities played a pivotal role as key beneficiaries of volunteer coordination, with a significant portion of the work occurring in the inter-municipal context.

3.2.4.4 PROMOTING AND HINDERING FACTORS

Promoting factors for the project can be seen in (i) the broad support of the province of Vorarlberg through the Zukunftsbüro, (ii) the transfer of experiences from Tyrol, (iii) the orientation of the LDS towards viable villages in Regio-V, and (iv) the lead of this social enterprise project by the LAG management. Although the project "To be committed" was very successful in terms of results, the concept of volunteer coordinators in small areas will not be continued. The main reason is that the municipalities are no more willing to pay the wage for the volunteer coordinators. Furthermore, perhaps during the last municipal elections in 2020 there have also been some shifts of interest.

3.2.5 REGIONAL EMBEDDEDNESS

The project 'To be committed' and the strategic coordination of volunteers are firmly rooted in the local community and operate across various sectors. They serve as a vital bridge connecting volunteers with institutions, including municipalities, provincial initiatives, and social organizations. These initiatives function as independent entities and maintain close ties with municipal service centers, as well as social and educational institutions at the local, regional, and supra-regional levels.

3.2.6 GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

In the province of Vorarlberg, there are two Local Action Groups (LAGs) – Regio-V and Vorderland Walgau Bludenz. Regio-V, structured as a cooperative, comprises representatives from both public and civil organizations. It consists of 20 individuals from

civil society and five from the public sector, with a gender distribution of 10 women and 15 men.

Regio-V encompasses 51 municipalities and comprises seven valleys. In the province of Vorarlberg, volunteer work represents a significant potential that deserves to be preserved and promoted. The province of Vorarlberg has been offering volunteer insurance and a comprehensive training and education program for volunteer coordination since 2007. This program is developed in close collaboration with the Office for Future Issues (refer to Figure 3-15). As an intermediary institution, the LEADER management of Regio-V plays a pivotal role at the interface of planning, politics, management, and regional coordination of participatory processes. They navigate within a complex political and institutional multi-level system, bridging the gap between top-down requirements and bottom-up networking.

Governance Arrangement in Regio-V, Vorarlberg, AT

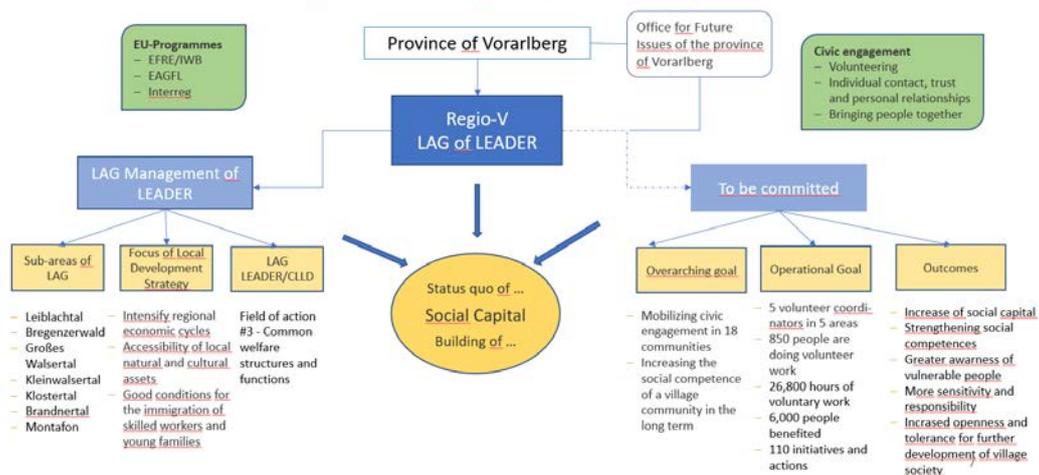


Figure 3-15

*Governance Arrangement in Regio-V, Vorarlberg, Austria
(Own organizational chart (Source: Own illustration, BAB, 2021))*

3.2.7 PUBLIC SUPPORT

The project "To be committed" was implemented in 18 out of the 51 municipalities within Regio-V. These 18 municipalities, recognizing the potential for volunteer coordination, contributed 20% of the total budget, which amounted to 609,000 Euros. The province of Vorarlberg funded an additional 20%, while LEADER (comprising EU and national funding) covered the remaining 60%. The pilot project demonstrated that establishing local volunteer coordination agencies can, over the medium term, enhance efficiency and reduce costs in the social work sector (Steurer, 2021). The lessons learned from the "To be committed" project suggest that the cost of employing one local volunteer coordinator, responsible for a population of 5,000 to 10,000 inhabitants (approximately five municipalities), would be approximately 40,000 Euros for a 20-hour part-time position. This scale allows for maintaining personal contacts and developing local networks. It's worth noting that this profession demands a high degree of time flexibility.

3.2.8 SOCIAL CAPITAL BUILDING: CONCLUDING REMARKS

The willingness to volunteer is quite strong in Vorarlberg, with over 55.7% of citizens aged 15 and above actively participating in voluntary work. However, there is still a need to raise awareness about the value of volunteer work and provide increased support to specific groups, such as single parents, low-income individuals, and, to some extent, older people, to counteract the risk of social isolation.

While the concept of social capital (as discussed by Bourdieu 1986 and Putnam 1993; 2000) is a valuable framework for explaining non-economic patterns, it's important to note that social capital alone is not sufficient for successful regional development. Social capital relies on a solid institutional framework. Policies should encourage cooperation and create opportunities for learning to foster trust among local actors, as exemplified by LEADER initiatives. Conversely, policies that lead to the closure of public services can disrupt community bonds, and local civic communities may struggle to compensate for such losses. It's crucial to understand that social capital is not a static or stable feature; it is in a constant state of flux and transition. The structure of social capital must adapt to new challenges and developments, giving rise to new collective organizations in response to evolving needs. One of the major future challenges is comprehending the policy structures and barriers associated with integrating rural development within the context of a more regionalized and 'programmed' state system. This challenge revolves around achieving rural integration as part of the new paradigm of rural development. Social capital can be likened to a software package that must be integrated into the hardware of functional infrastructures and services, serving as a prerequisite for successful rural development (Wiesinger 2007).

3.3 SPAIN (I) FRAIMON IN PEÑAFLORES – A SUSTAINABLE MODEL FOR SMALL-SCALE FARMS *(FRANCISCO JOSÉ GALLEGO MORENO, JOSÉ MARÍA DÍAZ PUENTE, MADDALENA BETTONI AND DIEGO SUAREZ)*

3.3.1 INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the transformation of agriculture and evolving framework conditions have posed significant challenges to the viability of middle- and small-scale farms in the Guadalquivir valley, Sevilla, Spain. To combat the adverse effects of these changes, a group of six small farmers took proactive measures. They identified common technical and legal aspects among their farms and devised a model for agile, economically sound, autonomous, and sustainable management that addresses their specific needs.

This initiative gave rise to the cooperative Fraimon, which has successfully enhanced the marketing and sale of agricultural products. Moreover, it has provided solutions to the environmental and labor issues affecting the rural population engaged in small agricultural enterprises. Additionally, Fraimon has contributed to the creation of employment opportunities for the rural community. Since its inception in 2014, Fraimon has not only elevated the self-esteem and confidence of small farmers in the municipality but has also

met the current environmental and labor standards expected of small farms. Consequently, it has secured the medium-term future of these smallholder farmers.

3.3.2 REGION

Peñaflor is a municipality situated in the Vega Alta del Guadalquivir region, located in the northeastern part of the province of Seville, Andalusia, Spain. It covers an area of 82.9 km² and had a population of 3,639 residents as of the INE census in 2020, with a population density of approximately 43.9 inhabitants per square kilometer according to IECA data from 2021. Its strategic geographical location within the alluvial plain of the Guadalquivir River, in close proximity to its right bank and the Sierra Morena mountain range, has endowed it with a privileged position that has played a significant role in the region's rich and extensive history. The presence of the Guadalquivir River has historically facilitated frequent trade and travel between settlements along its banks, fostering continuous communication among its inhabitants. This historical interaction is substantiated by the diverse array of archaeological remains dating back to the Neolithic period (circa 4,500 years BC) that can be found in the region.



Figure 3-16
Image of Peñaflor and location (LIAISON, 2020)

The availability of water resources and fertile riverbanks have played a pivotal role in shaping the regional economy of Peñaflor. Agriculture has historically been the dominant economic activity, with a focus on rainfed farming practices. This centered around the cultivation of olive groves for oil production, wheat, and the rearing of cattle and pork. The local economy heavily relied on agriculture due to its low mechanization levels and the significant labor requirements, which limited diversification into other economic sectors (Comunidad de Regantes del Canal de la Margen Derecha del Río Bembézar, 2014).

A transformative shift occurred in 1967 when a project was initiated to convert agricultural land on the right bank of the Guadalquivir River from rainfed to irrigated farming. This intervention facilitated the cultivation of water-intensive crops such as corn, cotton, sugar beets, soybeans, and others. It coincided with increased mechanization and the adoption of practices like certified seed usage, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides. In 2003, another project was implemented to modernize the existing irrigation system. This involved enhancing infrastructure and installing pumping and filtration stations. The project was completed in 2008 and required an investment of 52 million euros. The modernization of the irrigation system not only increased the value of agricultural land but also had a direct

impact on farm rental prices. Furthermore, it led to a notable shift in crop choices, transitioning from annual crops like corn, cotton, and sugar beets to perennial crops such as oranges, peaches, olive trees for oil production, and almonds. These woody crops necessitate year-round irrigation in the regional climate. This transition marked the beginning of an agricultural transformation in the region, characterized by increased mechanization, the use of certified seeds, mineral fertilizers, and phytosanitary products. However, these new crops required substantial initial investments, higher annual operational costs, increased training demands, greater speculation in market prices, and a heightened dependence on the food processing industry (Comunidad de Regantes del Canal de la Margen Derecha del Río Bembézar, 2014).

Concomitant with these structural changes was a shift in agricultural policy. Nationalized agricultural policies, where public administration controlled price-setting, storage, and product purchasing, gave way to a European agricultural policy that focused on international prices, quality standards, food safety, and environmental considerations. Presently, the municipality has an agricultural area of 5,655 hectares, of which 2,927 hectares are irrigated, primarily dedicated to orange cultivation, accounting for 52% of the total (IECA, 2020). There are 209 farms managed by 182 owners, with 24% being women, and 60% of owners are aged over 55 years (IECA, 2020). These ongoing and rapid changes in agricultural policy, cultivation practices, and crop selection have presented new challenges for middle and small-scale farmers in Peñaflores: (1) The decreasing average farm size is influenced by difficulties in land tenure within the regulatory framework of property succession. Currently, 63% of farms have an area of less than 10 hectares, with 55% having less than 5 hectares. This reduction in size hampers the profitability of farms by limiting their ability to negotiate input acquisition prices and sale prices for their products. (2) The lack of generational succession and the aging of agricultural landholders - 60% being over 55 years old and 33% over 65 years old - has implications for the long-term development of agricultural activity in the municipality. (3) Compliance with sustainability requirements mandated by the European Union Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) poses challenges for many small-scale farmers. Failure to meet certain conditions, such as the minimum period between applications of phytosanitary products or the use of prohibited substances, can disqualify farmers from receiving aid. Additionally, since January 1, 2013, all Spanish farmers are obligated to maintain an official register of all operational decisions, which is used to determine eligibility for grants. (4) The agricultural sector in Spain has its own complex system for hiring salaried staff, involving demanding administrative formalities that are particularly burdensome for small farms. With the aging of farm owners, this situation is becoming increasingly concerning, as retired landowners may not hire regular staff and are forced to employ temporary labor or contract service companies, resulting in high costs and administrative challenges. Furthermore, retired landowners are restricted from engaging in any work activities on their farms to avoid potential penalties. (5) The distance of farms from processing industries significantly reduces profit margins due to transportation costs. Moreover, the supply chain is highly fragmented, and prices are often dictated by large processing companies and major retailers, giving them significant influence over the value chain.

3.3.3 PRECONDITIONS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN THIS REGION

Peñaflor has been characterized by a notable deficiency in collaborative interaction among its citizens, resulting in a limited potential for social capital. This deficiency is underscored by prevalent issues such as a reluctance to cooperate with others, mistrust, individualism, paternalism, and conservatism within the local population. These elements, combined with the formidable challenges they are grappling with, have impeded the development of a cohesive and successful agricultural strategy in the region. Despite facing common obstacles, farmers have often persisted in working independently, refraining from sharing strategies, knowledge, and experiences. This tendency can be traced back to the adverse outcomes of past attempts at forming associations.

Over the previous generation, several associative initiatives, including cooperatives and agrarian transformation societies, were introduced in the municipality but ultimately ceased their operations. On numerous occasions, these associations sought to provide a collective solution to the challenges faced by farmers, but the limited social capital potential in the community largely contributed to their failure. In spite of this challenging backdrop, which is not conducive to associative endeavors, some cooperative relationships have endured among small groups of farmers. Successful cooperation in these instances has hinged on the presence of emotional and familial bonds, as well as a specific interest in sharing specialized agricultural machinery and knowledge for particular agricultural tasks. These collaborative interactions have remained informal but constitute a tangible reality in the region.

3.3.4 SOCIAL INCLUSION

Prior to 2009, the national agricultural census did not include gender differentiation, making it impossible to ascertain the number of women who owned agricultural holdings. In the agricultural census of Peñaflor conducted after 2009, it was revealed that women comprised 24% of the ownership of agricultural holdings. This statistic underscores the limited formal involvement of women in farm management and decision-making activities. In the case of Fraimon, the participation of women is more pronounced, as they make up 32.5% of the total membership. However, it's noteworthy that despite this increased presence, women have not been proportionally represented in the leadership roles. Currently, the governing board of Fraimon consists exclusively of men.

3.3.5 PROJECT DESCRIPTION



Figure 3-17
Fraimon initiative logo

The implementation of environmental and labor regulations, both at the national and regional levels, coupled with ongoing structural changes and persistent marketing challenges, has placed the sustainability of small agricultural holdings in the Guadalquivir valley in jeopardy. The absence of prior collaborative efforts has fostered a prevailing sense of complacency and resignation within the local population. However, in 2014, a group of six small farmers took a bold step by initiating the formation of an association with the primary objective of identifying common technical and legal aspects shared among their farms. Their goal was to design a management model that is agile, cost-effective, self-sustaining, and environmentally sustainable, one that could effectively address their specific needs. This initiative gave rise to the Agrarian Transformation Society known as Fraimon.

Fraimon was conceived as a technical and legal mechanism designed to secure a brighter future for small landowners and their farms. Since its inception, this innovative initiative has attracted the interest of more than 60 farm owners who have become members of the society. Notably, some of these farmers hail from neighboring municipalities facing similar challenges to those in Peñaflo. In the early stages of Fraimon's activities, various public administrations did not provide support for the initiative. This lack of support may have stemmed from the novelty of the concept and the innovative nature of the model, which may not have been immediately clear to everyone. However, over time, these public administrations have come to regard this initiative as a successful business grouping model that has the potential to be replicated in other rural areas.



Figure 3-18

*Constituent Assembly of the Agrarian Society of Transformation SAT Fraimon 2014
(González Sarabia, 2015).*

3.3.5.1 INTENTION

The initial aim was to collaboratively address the necessity of complying with environmental and labor regulations mandated by the public administration. This was to be achieved by streamlining the process through the establishment of a legally recognized entity, such as an association. However, as the association expanded its membership and fostered trust among its members, its objectives evolved and expanded to better meet the needs of its constituents. The association's goals have adapted in response to the changing needs of its members and continue to evolve accordingly. One of the association's most significant accomplishments has been its expansion into activities such as processing and commercializing the raw agricultural materials produced by its members. Additionally, it has facilitated collective purchases of agricultural supplies, negotiating more favorable prices and simplifying the coordination among producers.

3.3.5.2 PARTICIPATING ACTORS

From its inception, Fraimon has aimed to integrate not only the owners of agricultural holdings but also all the stakeholders involved in the value chain of oranges from production to marketing. The participation of these diverse actors has steadily increased over time, and the association currently encompasses the following categories:

1) Farmers: These are small landowners who initially felt overwhelmed by the escalating demands of environmental and labor regulations imposed by the public administration on their economic activities. Initially, Fraimon was founded by six landowners who, after carefully developing the concept and exploring various alternatives, took the initiative to establish the association. As the results of their efforts were shared with other landowners, the membership of Fraimon expanded to include 60 members.

2) Providers: With 60 landowners united within the same organization, it becomes much more convenient to consolidate the demand for essential agricultural products such as fertilizers, herbicides, plant protection products, and specialized machinery, among others. This new situation has facilitated continued collaboration with trusted suppliers, with whom relationships have been established over the years. Simultaneously, new terms and conditions of service, such as improved pricing, storage facilities, and product distribution, have been negotiated. This has led to enhancements in farm profitability and subsequently increased income for farmers.

3) Transformative Company: From the perspective of food processing companies, partnering with the association of farmers offers the opportunity to consolidate the sourcing of raw materials while also gaining access to a wider variety and higher quality produce. Fraimon has included one of the region's most significant companies, the Lasarte sales company, as a member. This partnership is based on mutual trust, where transparency and ongoing communication play pivotal roles, resulting in the establishment of a stable and mutually beneficial business relationship.



Figure 3-19

Integration of the Lasarte sales company into Fraimon (Lasarte Fraimon Facebook account).

3.3.5.3 CONCEPT OF BEST PRACTICE

The process initiated by Fraimon in 2014 owes its success to the dedication and commitment of the initial six farmers who played a pivotal role. The prevailing sense of resignation that characterized the region could have been detrimental to its development and the long-term future of the valley. In this context, the main "best practice" that can be identified is the courage exhibited by the initiators. Despite the goodwill and bravery they displayed, the creation of an association faced an initially unfavorable environment due to widespread mistrust and apprehension. Crucially were the preexisting relationships between some producers that proved instrumental in harnessing social bonds within the region as a foundation for structuring the association. In Peñaflo, there was initially limited enthusiasm among the local population for collaboration. The region and its residents were marked by unnecessary competitiveness and mistrust, leading to a culture of generalized individualism. Leveraging the few existing relationships of trust and generating positive outcomes from those connections proved essential in overcoming this challenge.

Another noteworthy best practice that contributed to achieving objectives and resolving initial conflicts was effective communication through appropriate channels. Unlike previous unsuccessful attempts to form farmer associations, the year 2014 offered a wider array of communication tools accessible to the rural community. These tools facilitated real-time information exchange, even across physical distances, and streamlined decision-making processes. Specifically, the implementation of an online messaging platform as the primary communication tool for Fraimon yielded significant success. This more informal type of communication not only reinforced existing relationships but also facilitated the establishment of new ones. Furthermore, additional online networks were effectively utilized to enhance the visibility of Fraimon's actions and decision-making processes, thereby engaging other farmers in the initiative. In conjunction with these communication tools, regular meetings or assemblies involving all partners were conducted to make collective decisions.

3.3.5.4 PROMOTING AND HINDERING FACTORS

Seven years after its formation, Fraimon's members continue to grapple with fears and concerns stemming from past unsuccessful experiences. These lingering apprehensions significantly influence the pace and intensity of their actions. These negative experiences remain the primary inhibiting factor, complicating the implementation of any new ideas or initiatives. To overcome these challenges, Fraimon has adopted a strategic approach that centers on small, easily achievable actions with short-term impacts. This strategy has been instrumental in building trust among its members. Simultaneously, trust has been fostered among partners through the individualization of risks and payments. Fraimon's primary objective, both in the past and present, has been to progress persistently, regardless of obstacles, thereby demonstrating that a brighter future for farmers can be achieved through cooperation.

Promoting factors (+)	Hindering factors (-)
Common adversities between farmers in the regions: administrative labor and environmental requirements.	Individualism
Common objective: seeking to improve farm profitability	Lack of collaborative culture
The existence of a core group of convinced partners who lead the process.	Failed previous associative experience within the region
Use of new communications tools between partners	Mistrust against the associative institutions in general and between farmers.
Maintaining the individual farm management	

3.3.5.5 BUILDING SOCIAL CAPITAL

The success of Fraimon's initiative in fostering key aspects of social capital, such as trust and cooperation, has been underpinned by the best practices outlined in Chapter 2. However, during the initial phase, the main challenge stemmed from the potentially low existing social capital due to negative experiences with formalized collaboration in the past. Consequently, the construction of social capital was not only crucial to overcoming difficulties but also the primary limitation in achieving it. The process of building social capital, therefore, assumed a unique and context-specific nature under these conditions. The actions that paved the way for this initiative and facilitated the challenging task of rebuilding a social network in Peñaflor were sharing and individualism, two seemingly contrasting aspects that needed to be integrated.

Initially, cooperation was confined to the group of the initial six farmers who were friends and had to manage agricultural holdings, some inherited through family legacies and others acquired as investments using their savings. These holdings were predominantly small, primarily featuring orange cultivation, and the owners were of advanced age. The increasing regulatory demands related to the environment and labor made management progressively more challenging. In this initial context, sharing the common anxieties, frustrations, and disorientation was essential. The sharing process helped them better cope with their situation by recognizing that their problems were shared and common, thereby converting their friendship into a willingness to collaborate.

A fundamental practice implemented by Fraimon, which has been instrumental in creating social capital in the territory, was maintaining the individuality of each farmer within the association. Initially, this approach might appear contrary to the concept of collaboration, but in this case, it was necessary and advantageous in the process of building social capital. In an environment marked by mistrust towards associations, borne out of several previous failed experiences, this individualized approach allowed the participation of actors who were attracted by the outcomes of the initiative but were still apprehensive about full cooperation. Gradually, through first-hand experiences of the producers, this approach helped rebuild the trust that had eroded among the population and fostered a sense of belonging. Clear regulations within the association also contributed to transparency and trust-building among participants. In this regard, although decisions within Fraimon are made collectively through an assembly composed of farmers, expenses are incurred individually. Each provider establishes individual contracts with each partner, specifying payment terms. Fraimon charges an entrance fee of €10 and an annual fee of €50 for common expenses.

Building on these initial elements, it became apparent that self-esteem and confidence in cooperation among municipal farmers were on the rise. This bolstered the development of a suitable and adapted response to the environmental and labor demands currently required for small agricultural operations. It also improved the economic viability of farms by realizing savings in management costs, input procurement, securing better prices, and establishing reliable sales channels. The initiative has generated interest among other farmers, enhancing trust among participants, opening up new avenues of cooperation, and

fostering new relationships between economic and social actors based on the needs of farmers.

3.3.5.6 ACTIVITIES

Fraimon engages in a range of activities to achieve its objectives. (1) **Technical Assistance:** Fraimon offers technical assistance through the availability of a technician who oversees pest and disease control in crops and manages the field notebook. Additionally, Fraimon provides individualized irrigation plans tailored to each farm. (2) **Administrative Assistance:** The association has an agreement with a local administrative agency to handle member accounts and workers' records. (3) **Occupational Risk Insurance:** Fraimon manages an occupational risk insurance policy for members who wish to participate. (4) **Supply Purchasing Management:** Fraimon takes charge of managing the purchase of agricultural supplies on behalf of its members. (5) **Product Marketing and Sales:** Fraimon oversees the marketing and sales process of agricultural products (González Sarabia, 2015). These services have contributed to the improvement of the marketing strategy and sale of agricultural products, provided agile solutions to environmental and labor requirements, and increased employment opportunities for rural communities. These specific achievements have fostered a shared sense of optimism about the medium-term future among smallholder farmers in the region.

3.3.6 REGIONAL EMBEDDEDNESS

Fraimon's activities and the unexpected positive outcomes it has achieved over seven years have garnered significant interest in the region. Various public administration bodies, including the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Labor, and Ministry of Finance, have expressed interest in this model. Fraimon has engaged in personal interactions with members of these ministries on multiple occasions to explain the new management model being developed in Peñaflo. Moreover, due to the dissemination of the model in the region, farmers from other areas of Andalusia regularly visit Peñaflo to learn about its operation.

In this regard, there has been a concentric and progressive involvement of actors from the region. Initially, a significant portion of small landowners in the municipality became engaged, overcoming their fears and reservations. Subsequently, other regional actors were integrated, such as providers, technicians, and companies, with the aim of adding value to the economic activity of the municipality. Finally, there is the involvement of an agent for the purchase.



Figure 3-20

Fraimon governing board and partners (LIAISON, 2020).

3.3.7 SOCIAL CAPITAL BUILDING: CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Fraimon association has served as a pivotal instrument for fostering enhanced social cohesion and nurturing social capital within the region of Peñaflo. It has successfully achieved its objectives thanks to the determination and resilience of the local community. Despite the initially challenging conditions, which included a lack of trust among producers and the negative experiences with previous associations in the region, Fraimon has effectively reconstructed a social network. It has facilitated cooperation, the exchange of knowledge and experiences, and, over time, the gradual rebuilding of trust among its members.

The primary driving force behind this accomplishment has been the willingness of all local producers to openly share their fears, concerns, and challenges. They have united under a common objective and within a regulatory framework that guides their journey toward shared goals. Additionally, the association has demonstrated a remarkable ability to respect the apprehensions of individual producers without imposing cooperation. This approach has allowed producers the autonomy needed to build trust in the process. It highlights the importance of tailoring solutions to the specific context and characteristics of the local population and underscores that one-size-fits-all approaches may not be suitable for every situation.

3.4 SPAIN (II) HUETE FUTURO FOUNDATION – PRESERVING THE HERITAGE OF A SMALL TOWN *(FRANCISCO JOSÉ GALLEGO MORENO, JOSÉ MARÍA DÍAZ PUENTE, DIEGO SUAREZ AND MADDALENA BETTONI)*

3.4.1 INTRODUCTION

Huete stands as one of the municipalities in the province of Cuenca, Spain, that boasts a significant architectural-cultural heritage. Unfortunately, due to a lack of care and conservation efforts, this heritage has remained abandoned for approximately 50 years. In response to this challenge, the Huete Future Foundation (FHF) was established in 2008 with the aim of shaping a brighter future for Huete and its heritage. The FHF operates as a private not-for-profit organization dedicated to the rescue and promotion of Huete's historical, archaeological, ethnographical, and natural heritage. Currently, over 350 individuals from the municipality, various entities, and public administrations are actively engaged in this initiative. The selection of this initiative, as an exemplary case of social capital, is primarily attributed to its application of diverse practices focused on instilling motivation, nurturing skills, and creating opportunities for the entire population residing in Huete. These efforts have yielded tangible results in a relatively short span of time, positioning Huete as a regional model for other municipalities within the Castilla-La Mancha community.

3.4.2 REGION

Huete is situated in the province of Cuenca, Spain, within the Comarca of Alcarria Conquense. It is part of the autonomous community of Castilla-La Mancha. Huete encompasses an area of 378 square kilometers and is located at an altitude of 810 meters above sea level (Figure 1).

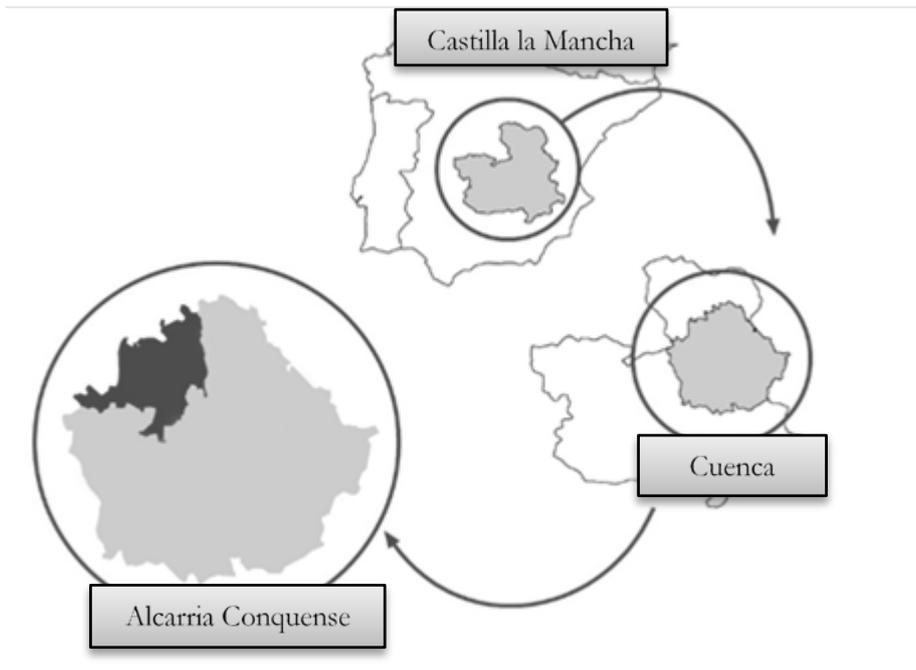


Figure 3-21
Geographical location of Huete (CEDER, 2016)

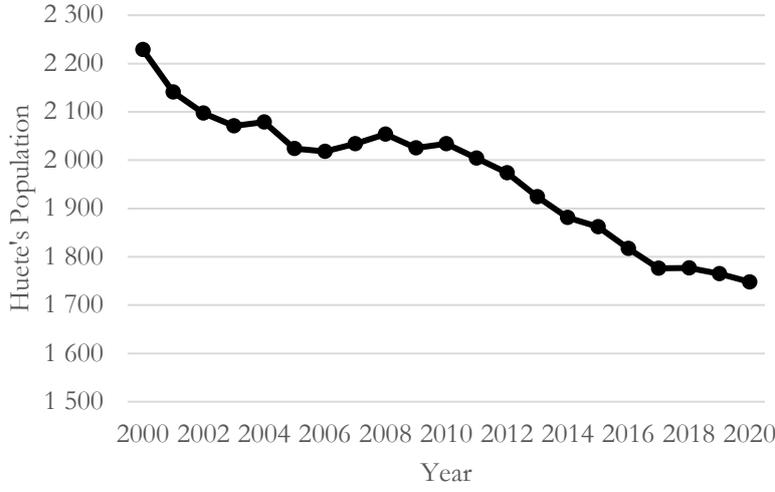


Figure 3-22
Population of Huete in the last 20 years. Author's elaboration with datas from INE, 2020.

3.4.1 PRECONDITIONS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN THIS REGION

Huete boasts one of the most significant architectural and cultural heritages in the entire province of Cuenca. Its historical roots date back to the 6th century BC when it was first settled, serving as a hub for mining exploitation and housing remnants of several late-Roman towns. Over the centuries, Huete has been witness to various historical events and developments, resulting in a rich architectural heritage that continues to stand today. This heritage, coupled with its deep-rooted artistic and architectural culture, as well as its distinct traditions, forms a critical foundation for the construction of social capital. However, despite its immense significance, this heritage has suffered from neglect and lack of conservation efforts for more than five decades.

As a consequence, the Hispania Nostra Association, a national organization dedicated to preserving Spanish cultural heritage at risk of disappearance or degradation, has included two of Huete's heritage assets—a 17th-century mural and a 16th-century communication arch of the Cathedral—in its 'Red List.' The degradation of these assets can be attributed to social issues such as pessimism, passivity, apathy, and a lack of administrative management. Both the local population and the administration had lost interest in maintaining the quality of this heritage and working together toward its preservation. Socioeconomic difficulties and high rates of emigration likely contributed to this loss of interest in conserving the region's cultural heritage. In this context, the conditions for building social capital were challenging, marked by a demotivated and distrustful population, along with a prevailing sense of resignation towards opportunities for utilizing the territory and its cultural value.

3.4.2 SOCIAL INCLUSION

The statutes of the Huete Future Foundation (FHF) explicitly state that the Foundation's activities are inclusively directed toward society. It welcomes any individual or entity, without discrimination, as beneficiaries of its services and benefits. Within the context of a rural town like Huete, the role of women is essential for social revitalization. In this regard, the FHF has actively promoted the involvement of women in the Foundation through three key avenues: a) Involvement in the schools that constitute the Board of Trustees; b) Active participation in the Foundation's municipal activities, where women's roles are consistently pivotal; c) Membership in the Friends of the Foundation. Furthermore, engaging young people has been crucial for the town's future and the continued existence of the Foundation. Each year, the Board of Trustees formulates action plans that include activities designed to encourage the participation of young individuals.

3.4.3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Established in 2008, the Huete Future Foundation (FHF) was founded with the overarching goal of shaping a future for Huete and its surrounding region. As a non-profit organization, the FHF has a twofold mission: to preserve and safeguard the historical, archaeological, ethnographic, and natural heritage of the municipality, while simultaneously enhancing the social and economic conditions of its entire populace (Fundación Huete Futuro, 2009).



Figure 3-23

Fundación Huete Futuro (FHF) logo

3.4.3.1 INTENTION

The Foundation's unwavering commitment and dedication to rehabilitating the historical heritage of the municipality serve a twofold purpose: improving the economic situation and halting the continuous population decline that Huete has experienced in recent years. Situated in proximity to two major metropolises, Madrid and Valencia, with a combined population of ten million people, Huete possesses significant cultural heritage that could transform it into an attractive tourist destination. However, before the establishment of the FHF, there had been a complete lack of conservation efforts for some of the oldest and most remarkable structures in the municipality. The creation of the FHF led to interventions in the real estate heritage of the town. Through the restoration of its artistic and cultural heritage, the FHF also aimed to restore a sense of identity to the region and its inhabitants, envisaging a future where they could reclaim their heritage. The FHF's objectives extend beyond the improvement of historical heritage; it also seeks to foster local economic development and create employment opportunities in cultural, tourism, and heritage restoration services. Additionally, the Foundation aims to undertake actions and activities that contribute to the cultural and social development of the municipality of Huete.

3.4.3.2 PARTICIPATING ACTORS AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The FHF does not intend to be, nor will it ever become, a closed foundation established exclusively by and for elites. On the contrary, the FHF was founded with broad and inclusive objectives that evolve over time and can accommodate diverse trends, sensibilities, and sectors within the community. Therefore, the Foundation positions itself as an opportunity to integrate different segments of the community to address the municipality's needs.

The Foundation is a private, non-profit organization of a foundational nature, with its assets permanently allocated to serve general interest purposes. The Board of Trustees,

responsible for approving the budget and making essential decisions, comprises three main categories of stakeholders:

(1) Huete City Council: This public institutional group, consisting of individuals from the administrative and political personnel of the municipality, owns a significant portion of the town's heritage. Their involvement and interest in the FHF's activities have been crucial, particularly in collaborating on technical works and studies.

(2) Representatives from Associative Entities: Each of these entities, active in the region, has a representative who actively participates in planning and executing activities in collaboration with the FHF.

(3) Representative Group of Inhabitants: This group includes individuals who are originally from Huete or have family roots in the town, as well as those who, despite not meeting these criteria, express a desire to contribute to Huete's improvement and development. The Board of Trustees is responsible for fulfilling various foundational and regulatory purposes, managing the Foundation's assets and rights, and ensuring the continued effectiveness and relevance of the Foundation. The Board also disseminates information about the Foundation's objectives and activities to the local population, Friends of the Foundation, and other individuals with any connection to the locality.

The central actors involved in the Foundation possess diverse levels of knowledge, skills, and capacities, which collectively constitute a valuable management asset. Their diversity enables a comprehensive understanding of the local context, facilitating informed decision-making. The personal qualities of these directly involved actors have encouraged the formation of networks for economic, technical, investigative, and social collaboration, as well as the dissemination of local results. The shared tenacity and vision of these key actors have garnered the support and motivation of the majority of the population, leading to increased participation over time.

The 'Friends of the Foundation' initiative stands as a clear example of successful actor engagement. This initiative includes 375 individuals willing to collaborate with the FHF, albeit sporadically and indirectly. Among them, 14 individuals are consistently involved in administrative activities and the development of new initiatives for the town. The group's size can significantly expand seasonally, depending on the skills required for specific activities. Presently, the Foundation is undergoing a generational change within its board of trustees, which poses potential risks to its continuity. Therefore, it is essential to recruit individuals with similar capacities and social commitments, who are willing to dedicate their time to the Foundation and the future of Huete. Values such as "love for the people," "personal satisfaction," "selfless work," and "altruism" should continue to guide new actors joining this project.

3.4.3.3 BEST PRACTICES

Before the establishment of the FHF, the region faced considerable challenges characterized by chronic discouragement and widespread apathy regarding these issues. To transition from good ideas to effective actions, the founding group recognized the need to establish strong relationships with municipal actors and kindle motivation and interest in them to collaborate on heritage preservation. Building trust and fostering collaboration with municipal actors was indispensable for the project's success. Despite the Huete public administration's prior role in the decline of cultural heritage, the promoters opted to involve them by sharing the same sense of urgency they felt. This has proven fundamental for both the Foundation's and the community's future. It underscores the significance of involving actors from the outset around common objectives, which subsequently become the primary link uniting all stakeholders.

Given the nature, structure, and trajectory of FHF, conflicts during activities' development, both internal and external to the region, were inevitable. Many of these conflicts involved public administrations. Collaborative capacity emerged as crucial since creating a common goal and fostering a strong desire to collaborate were insufficient. Resolving conflicts was facilitated by the charismatic leadership of Leandro Romero, the Foundation's president, who possesses the ability to engage in constructive communication and negotiation with all parties. Romero's leadership, from 2008 to the present, has been characterized by several qualities and attributes, including the ability to build trust within the team, problem-solving skills, motivational prowess, and the cultivation of a work ethic that propelled the achievement of various objectives. Factors contributing to the Foundation's success in inspiring the local population were transparency and communication with all actors and administrations involved in its actions, as well as public dissemination of activities and results. The publication of newsletters played a significant role in keeping all stakeholders, including the population at large, consistently informed. This contributed to building trust in the Foundation's commitment and provided visibility to its objectives and actions, thereby increasing the population's interest and motivation.



Figure 3-24
 Images of the last and first newsletters of the Foundation
 (Fundación Huete Futuro, 2009, 2021a)

Another important aspect helping to facilitate achieving results was the clear and early definition of the legal structure of the foundation, including the scheme of how to make decisions and the consequent hierarchy. Clear norms and ground rules from the beginning helped to build trust among participants.

3.4.3.4 PROMOTING AND HINDERING FACTORS

In the 13 years since its foundation, *FHF* enabled identifying those factors that have contributed to the achievement of its objectives. Among them following factors can be highlighted: a) Coordination from the first moment with the Huete city council and especially with the government team; b) Transparency of the actions, both in their design, execution, and justification; c) Continuous communication, both internally to the members of the schools, Friends of the Foundation, and the general population, as well as externally to the various public administrations involved in heritage.

It is also possible to identify obstacles that have hindered or lessened the intensity of *FHF's* work. Among them are a) The spread culture of apathy, or the common practice of waiting for others to solve the problems; b) Lack of confidence in their own strengths; c) Little collaboration between public administrations, which leads to misunderstandings, lack of communication, and unnecessary delays; d) Permanent mistrust and suspicion towards initiatives that arise and are led by local actors; and e) *FHF's* low level of financial resources, which limited the immediate execution of other projects.

3.4.3.5 BUILDING SOCIAL CAPITAL

Interviews and participatory workshops carried out by Quintana et al. (2022) with residents of Huete who have been part of the Foundation indicate that 56% of the inhabitants detect positive changes in social relationships. Residents also state that the Foundation's activities had promoted the development of the 'emotional value' of architectural and cultural heritage, 'personal satisfaction' and pride in the community. In addition, various practices that have generated positive changes in social relationships were identified. These practices are associated with creating motivation, abilities, and opportunities within the territory.

Regarding the process of building motivation to work together, the main successful practice was to strive for short-term and tangible results. This has made it possible to generate interest in the new initiative from the very beginning by drawing the attention of the population and attracting them to get involved and actively participate. Also, 80% of Huete's population have indicated that *FHF* promoted practices stimulating the co-construction of knowledge through the local population, generating technical and personal capacities to work together and social awareness and engagement. Activities such as awareness campaigns about producing and eating endogenous products thereby encouraging local entrepreneurship, social events and educational activities, and competitions were highlighted. Finally, the creation of opportunities was a side consequence of the heritage restoration process. It generates social inclusion, construction of interaction networks, and empowerment of society. In particular, the increase in tourism due to the foundation activities allows the mobilization of human and financial resources, the promotion of local agri-food production and commercialization, and the increase in the innovation mechanism related to the demand for tourism.

In addition to the social impacts derived from *FHF's* activities, the economic development of the rural population has also been a factor in which important advances have been seen. The creation of cultural events, such as gastronomic fairs, has allowed the creation of social entities that promote quality gastronomic products, thus promoting the trade of traditional products of the municipality such as cucumbers. Other cultural and educational activities promoted by *FHF*, such as concerts and symposia, allow tourism and interest to be attracted not only from neighboring municipalities but also from large cities like Madrid. These types of activities have been considered by the population itself as fundamental means of the rural development of its locality.



Figure 3-25

Cucumber gastronomic fair held in 2018. (Fundación Huete Futuro, 2021b)

3.4.3.6 ACTIVITIES

Each year, the Foundation meticulously prepares an action plan, which serves as an institutional planning document outlining the specific actions and activities it intends to undertake. Over the period from 2008 to 2019, the Foundation successfully executed a total of 110 activities aimed at advancing the restoration of heritage. These activities encompassed three distinct categories of actions.

Remarkably, during these 11 years, activities directly aligned with the Foundation's primary mission, which is the restoration of architectural and cultural heritage, accounted for 26% of the total activities conducted (Quintana et al., 2022). Among the most significant accomplishments realized within the municipality, the Foundation can proudly highlight several noteworthy projects. These include the restoration of canvases, the enhancement of Valdemoro Del Rey square, the comprehensive refurbishment of the Sacro Art Museum, the meticulous restoration of Callejón del Moro, the implementation of informative tourist signage highlighting Huete's rich heritage, and the restoration of a traditional Santa Ana cave. Additionally, numerous smaller-scale projects have been executed, demonstrating the Foundation's unwavering commitment to preserving and revitalizing the municipality's cultural and architectural heritage.

The proportion of these heritage-related activities in relation to the total number of initiatives may appear relatively modest. However, this distinction arises from the substantial resources, both in terms of funding and time, required to complete such endeavors (Quintana et al., 2022). This unique characteristic underscores the fact that

achieving the broader mission necessitates the execution of a multitude of diverse activities, not limited solely to those directly linked to the ultimate desired outcomes.



Figure 3-26

Museum of Sacred Art in 2014 after its remodeling (Fundación Huete Futuro, 2021b).



Figure 3-27

Callejón del Moro in 2013 after its remodeling (Fundación Huete Futuro, 2021b)



Figure 3-28

Santa Ana Cave in 2019 during its remodeling process (Fundación Huete Futuro, 2021b).

In the case of Huete, additional side activities were developed to give visibility to the Foundation at the local, provincial and regional level (40% of the activities) (Quintana et al.,2022). These promotion activities facilitate the creation of a network and the promotion of the identity of Huete in the larger region. Some examples are the Campaign Decorate Your House, the Summer Solstice and Christmas Jazz concert cycles, the awareness campaign on the cucumber, the holding of symposia on the challenges and opportunities of heritage in rural areas, as well as the innovative ideas contest.



Figure 3-29

Holding a Jazz concert in 2018, an event that generally brings together both tourists and the local population, boosting the municipality's economy (Fundación Huete Futuro, 2021b).

Another crucial category of activities, constituting 34% of the total, focused on informative sessions aimed at various stakeholders. These activities served to keep the population, whether directly or indirectly associated with FHF, collaborative entities, and public administration, informed about the progress and outcomes of the Foundation's endeavors

(Quintana et al., 2022). Several notable examples of these informative activities included collaborations for the restoration of the Convent of Jesús y María to establish a photography museum, efforts related to the restoration of the apse of Santa María de Atienza, coordination in the development of the municipality's urban planning document, and advisory services for the rehabilitation of the Jesuit college. Such activities are instrumental in fostering transparency and mutual understanding among all involved parties, thereby nurturing trust and a willingness to collaborate. They ensure that everyone remains informed and engaged in the Foundation's initiatives, enhancing cohesion and cooperation within the community.



Figure 3-30

Santa Mara de Atienza Apse in 2015 after its remodel (Fundación Huete Futuro, 2021b).

In the execution of these diverse activities, FHF assumes various roles. It serves as a catalyst for heritage intervention projects, inspiring and driving initiatives aimed at preserving cultural heritage. Additionally, it acts as a motivator, fostering awareness among the population regarding the socioeconomic significance of heritage restoration and management. Furthermore, FHF collaborates with public and private entities that can contribute to achieving the ultimate goal (Quintana et al., 2022). Adapting behaviors and attitudes to align with the objectives of different stakeholders is a fundamental aspect of successful collaboration, critical to the accumulation of social capital (Rivera et al., 2018). This flexibility enables FHF to effectively engage with a range of actors and work towards shared goals.

3.4.4 REGIONAL EMBEDDEDNESS

Currently, FHF is primarily focused on executing its projects and initiatives at the local level, with a primary emphasis on the development of the municipality of Huete. Nevertheless, there is potential for the Foundation to extend its involvement to other nearby municipalities in the province of Cuenca in the future. This expansion could involve sharing FHF's experience and resources to aid in the development of projects in municipalities such as Vellisca, Valle de Altomira, or Alcanzar del Rey.

3.4.5 GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

FHF's board of trustees is composed of representatives from three key groups: the municipality's city council, the collective of associative entities, and the local inhabitants. The inclusive nature of the board, which represents all stakeholders involved, has been a significant factor contributing to the Foundation's success.



Figure 3-31
Actors who are members of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation (Fundación Huete Futuro, 2021b).

This forward-looking project in Huete remains inclusive and open to not only the resident community of the municipality but also to all those who wish to contribute to its expansion and mission. Currently, the Foundation boasts approximately 375 "Friends of the Foundation" who are instrumental in giving purpose to this initiative and the activities it undertakes. These Friends of the Foundation provide financial support regularly or on an ad-hoc basis, which greatly aids in the execution of heritage-related activities. Additionally, they offer logistical assistance when needed and actively promote the dissemination of the achieved results, thus encouraging more individuals to join the network (Fundación Huete Futuro, 2017).

FHF does not possess stable, independent funding and relies on an annual budget based on the expected contributions from the Friends of the Foundation. For its asset-related initiatives, the Foundation consistently seeks financial assistance or subsidies from public administrations, typically covering between 80% and 100% of the project execution costs. The mobilization of financial resources has been essential in facilitating the planning, execution, and collaboration on various projects and activities.

3.4.6 SOCIAL CAPITAL BUILDING: CONCLUDING REMARKS

The municipality of Huete stands as an exemplary model of rural development promotion. Based on insights gathered from visits, feedback from its residents, and available documentation, Huete is currently characterized by robust trust and participation networks among associations and stakeholders. Furthermore, there is a high degree of transparency and accountability in the initiatives undertaken by the foundation. These distinctive features have, in recent years, allowed the constructive cultivation of social capital potential. This is evidenced by the ongoing commitment and interest of the community in the foundation's activities. As a result, there has been a revitalization of local economic activity, generating not only economic vitality but also social dynamism for the entire population.

Despite the significant progress achieved, there remains much work to be done. For this reason, both FHF and the municipality of Huete must persist in fostering interest and participation, not only among the foundation's supporters but also among those who are not directly engaged. This continuous effort helps to expand cooperation networks, build trust, and reinforce norms among the local population. Elevated levels of social capital not only stimulate productivity and innovation in rural areas but also enhance transparency within the involved stakeholders.

3.5 PORTUGAL (I) THE WINES OF ALENTEJO SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM (WASP) (DOMINIK NOLL, JOSÉ MUÑOZ ROJAS, TERESA PINTO CORREIA, AND MARIA RIVERA)

3.5.1 INTRODUCTION

The Wines of Alentejo Sustainability Program (WASP) serves as a catalyst for the adoption of sustainability standards within the wine production sector in Alentejo, Portugal. This initiative addresses gaps in both national and regional regulations pertaining to sustainable wine production and strives to position Alentejo wine brands favorably in international markets. The program originated as a publicly funded project initiated by the Alentejo Regional Wine Growing Commission (CVRA), a private institution established in 1989. It has since evolved through collaboration with academic partners and stakeholders from the regional wine production sector. Following the initial two years of public funding, the project transitioned into a voluntary program that now boasts more than 450 members. These participants actively monitor and enhance their economic, social, and environmental sustainability practices using a flexible framework of quantitative indicators.

This chapter provides an overview of the program's evolution, tracing its inception to its current accomplishments, and elucidates how it has become an integral part of the Alentejo wine region. It also underscores the pivotal role played by various aspects of social capital in this journey. Furthermore, we will spotlight the factors that have contributed to the program's success, as well as the persistent challenges it faces.



Figure 3-32

Vinyards in Alentejo, Portugal (Photo: CVRA)

3.5.2 REGION

Alentejo is a NUTS-2 region located in south-central Portugal, renowned for its rich cultural and historical heritage. The region's unique landscape is predominantly characterized by the silvopastoral land use system known as Montado, which comprises a blend of cork oaks (*Quercus suber*), holm oaks (*Quercus ilex*), and pastures for ruminant grazing. Additionally, Alentejo is celebrated for its thriving olive and wine production industries.



Figure 3-33

Alentejo, Portugal (Wikimedia Commons - Rei-artur)

The wine sector holds immense historical, cultural, ecological, and economic significance for Portugal. With an average annual production value of approximately 820 million Euros, this sector constitutes 11% of Portugal's agricultural economic output. Notably, around one-third of this economic contribution originates from Alentejo (Martins et al., 2019). Alentejo wine enjoys the distinction of being a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), in addition to the Protected Geographical Indication (IGP) Alentejano. While many regions in Alentejo have experienced economic decline and witnessed the emigration of their predominantly youthful population in recent decades, the wine sector has shown resilience and represents a financially sustainable agricultural segment (Muñoz-Rojas et al., 2022). The consistently high quality of regional wines has led to continuous growth in exports over the past few decades, while wine imports have remained relatively stable. This has resulted in a favorable shift in the national trade balance.

It is worth noting that wine production relies heavily on favorable and well-balanced environmental conditions, including ample sunshine, access to clean water, rich biodiversity, and healthy soils. The increasing demand for sustainability standards and labels in the international wine market has played a significant role in driving the implementation of the program described in this chapter.

3.5.3 SOCIAL INCLUSION AND GENDER ASPECTS

Women play a vital role in WASP, contributing to a relatively balanced representation of gender roles within the program. The former president of the Regional Commission was a woman who played a significant role in establishing the program. Additionally, there has been a growing trend of women assuming leadership roles in wine production activities and within wine companies. Currently, 50% of participating companies are either led by women or have women in top management positions (João Barroso, personal communication).

3.5.4 PRECONDITIONS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN THIS REGION

In recent decades, the emigration of young people has led to a decline in the potential for social capital in rural Alentejo. It is essential to note that WASP was developed within the wine production sector, which, in general, holds a more advantageous position among agricultural producers in Alentejo (Martins et al., 2019). The program was initiated by the Alentejo Regional Wine Growing Commission (CVRA), a well-established private institution that has been collaborating with wine farmers and producers in the region since 1989. The CVRA has access to a wealth of expertise from the public, academic, and private sectors and has built enduring trust-based relationships with many wine producers in the region. The fact that this institution spearheaded WASP significantly contributed to its success. The CVRA managed to create a network of like-minded individuals with shared interests and objectives. Through frequent meetings and events, they fostered a trusting and open environment where everyone's opinions were valued. This allowed members to share confidential business information with competitors, strengthening the entire wine sector in

the region. The regional integration of the CVRA and years of collaboration among wine producers in Alentejo were pivotal for the long-term success of WASP. These are the primary preconditions that amplified the social capital potential for this initiative, significantly contributing to the success of the described program.

3.5.5 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

3.5.5.1 INTENTION

The Wines of Alentejo Sustainability Program (WASP), originally known as "Programa de Sustentabilidade de Vinhos do Alentejo" in Portuguese, aims to establish a framework for adopting best practices throughout the entire wine production chain, from grape cultivation to the export of bottled wine in Alentejo, Portugal. The program was created in response to deficiencies in regional and national legislation and increasing global market demands for sustainability principles in wine production.

WASP offers support to its members to evaluate their current practices with the goal of enhancing the competitiveness and environmental sustainability of the Alentejo wine production sector. The program encompasses best practices in viticulture and wine cellars, advising members on how to integrate eco-efficient principles to maximize resource utilization, reduce waste, and lower internal operating costs simultaneously. On its website, the organization provides information on maintaining and enhancing biodiversity, waste reduction, the promotion of alternative energy sources, responsible water resource management, and cultivating positive relationships with the local and broader regional community. It also offers guidance on habitat conservation, ecosystem services, circular economy practices, composting, and the development of alternative energy systems such as photovoltaic systems (WASP, 2021). The program primarily focuses on two innovation streams: (I) organizational innovation, linked to the social capital element of cooperation, through a voluntary agreement and open-ended process where members frequently convene in meetings to discuss and negotiate potential improvements, and (II) product-related innovation, aimed at adding value and branding through sustainability-oriented wine production practices.



Figure 3-34

Best practice in wine cellars as promoted by WASP (Photo CVRA).

3.5.5.2 PARTICIPATING ACTORS AND INITIATION OF PROJECT

The planning process for the Wines of Alentejo Sustainability Program (WASP) began in 2013, culminating in the program's development in 2015. It was crafted by a working group comprising the Alentejo Regional Wine Growing Commission (CVRA), the University of Évora, regional vineyard farmers, wine producers, and the Technical Association of Wine Producers of Alentejo. Motivated by the growing international market demand for sustainability certifications in wine production and inspired by similar sustainability programs in wine regions such as the USA and Australia, CVRA took the lead. They hired an external expert to coordinate the proposal for a sustainability program tailored to the regional wine production sector.

The external expert facilitated several preparatory meetings among all members of the working group to finalize the program's plans and prepare an application for initial public funding through a rural development program. The University of Évora, as a key scientific contributor in the region, provided scientific oversight and contributed to meetings and scientific reports. Vineyard farmers and wine producers willingly participated in both phases, actively engaging in implementing the proposed indicators and certifying their products. Importantly, participants could opt out of the program at any point without incurring costs. Their primary motivation stemmed from their desire to enhance efficiency in wine production while simultaneously reducing production costs and environmental impacts.

According to Muñoz-Rojas et al. (2022), the managers of CVRA played a central role throughout the process. From the project's inception, they identified the necessary institutional support, cultivated trust among all stakeholders, and encouraged their involvement in the innovation process. Through their efforts, they expanded and diversified the network of actors, disseminated and embedded innovation across various contexts, and ultimately propelled the program beyond the initial project-term funding to establish long-

term sustainability initiatives. The high level of interest displayed by producers and other stakeholders in the program has led to its growth, currently boasting 454 members who collectively produce wine on 10,323 hectares in Alentejo. The program's success is primarily attributed to the added value and cost reduction experienced by all contributing members through the creation of a shared quality standard based on sustainability principles for the region's wines. In a workshop held by the University of Évora in 2020 one of the members of WASP stated:

“The project left no one behind. All types of enterprises with the sector were involved, it did not matter whether they were big or small, more or less innovative, followed different production practices, etc. This is the strength of the project, giving the same voice to everyone in the sector, sharing knowledge and listening to their needs and problems with the aim of overcoming them together.”

As a crucial precondition for its success, many of the project partners had already collaborated before the project's commencement. This indicates that the program leverages and strengthens pre-existing social capital among vineyard farmers and wine producers, enhancing relationships among partners and fostering trust, values, social bonds, behaviors, routines, and preferences. Presently, 70% of the vineyard farmers' cooperatives in Alentejo, representing 90% of the vineyards in the region, are partners in the WASP program. These cooperatives have collectively embraced WASP and ensure the sustainable production of all their members, a requirement for producers to remain part of the program.

3.5.5.3 PROMOTING AND HINDERING FACTORS

The farming community in Alentejo is still marked by widespread suspicion and apprehension about the unknown, posing a significant barrier to the successful implementation of the program. This skepticism hampers innovation processes, which tend to progress more smoothly and rapidly in countries like the USA or Australia (Muñoz-Rojas et al., 2022). Overcoming this hurdle necessitates substantial efforts in communication and community engagement to explain the program and gain trust and participation. One effective strategy involves providing local producers with opportunities to speak during workshops or other events, fostering trust among fellow producers.

While initial public funding facilitated the program's initiation, it also had limitations due to specific planned activities with limited flexibility. This constraint prompted the strategy of transitioning the project into a self-funded, open-ended program, drawing inspiration from similar initiatives in other countries. This shift was aimed at ensuring the program's future independence and sustainability. The program's financing mechanism operates through a contribution of less than 1% from the retail price, paid by producers for each certification seal on each bottle sold. Additionally, voluntary contributions from producers through the Wine Sustainability Certification further generate income to sustain the program. The relatively low flexibility of adapting public funds to real-world dynamics can thus be seen as

a promoting factor that contributed to the current financial structure of WASP. The success of WASP resulted from the effective interplay of promoting factors that helped surmount hindering factors, which were, and still are, certainly present (Table 3-2).

Table 3-2: Promoting and hindering factors of WASP.

Promoting factors (+)	Hindering factors (-)
Wine producers are often better situated among agricultural producers in Alentejo	High levels of suspicion and fear of the unknown among farming communities
Public funding enabled the 2,5 years initiation phase of the program	Little flexibility of the obtained public funds for re-designing and changing content of activities in the first 2 years.
Need to innovate the sector to increase its national and international competitiveness	Small producers might struggle as they don't have the required investments for the proposed improvements
The commitment of CVRA to establish the space for innovative interaction	Some companies have their own internal agenda which might restrict them to fully participate in the program
Strong participative and democratic organization of the program	Technical and scientific progress often requires demanding internalization processes which are a prerequisite to move to the next level or stage.
Good reputation of CVRA in the region among the participants	
Champions who pioneer to share their best practices and experiences among others	
The program helps to liberate farmers and other actors from constraints of regular (private and public) funding entities and schemes. Thus, providing them with more administrative and organizational flexibility.	
Leadership qualities of WASP management	
Business orientation of key stakeholders and actors ensures the continuity of the process	

3.5.6 WASP ACTIVITIES ENHANCING SOCIAL CAPITAL

3.5.6.1 NETWORK CREATION

The establishment of frequent connections between CVRA, the University of Évora, and wine producers facilitates regular exchange and knowledge transfer among these groups. During workshops, producers who have gained experience with innovation and new practices share their insights, successes, and failures with others. This exchange of experiences and perspectives makes knowledge accessible to all WASP members and significantly contributes to the generation of social capital within the community. WASP organizes a variety of activities, including workshops, sector-specific documents, study visits, meetings, and manages a website and online communication channels. The founding organization, CVRA, collaborates with academic partners and producers to organize an additional three workshops and three study visits annually, attracting between 30 and 80 producers to these events. Moreover, WASP engages in information exchange with similar sustainability programs in viticulture worldwide. WASP serves as a best-practice example for fostering social capital through interactive innovation, improving sustainability standards within the sector by creating a social space that brings together numerous actors and stakeholders involved in the production and distribution of Alentejo wines. All participants collectively shape the program's rigorous minimum sustainability standards, assessed through a mandatory self-assessment certification tool aligned with the project's objectives and updated annually (Muñoz-Rojas et al., 2022). The program manager at CVRA has even been contacted by a new initiative from Alentejo seeking to implement a similar program for olive producers, indicating that WASP's influence extends beyond its own network, inspiring other sectors to adopt more sustainable farming and production practices.

3.5.6.2 ENHANCING COOPERATION

WASP has brought about changes in the practices and behaviors of wine producers and improved the quality of interactions among project members. The program has fostered an environment of trust and collaboration among individuals who were previously competitors. Thanks to WASP, information is no longer concealed, and everyone benefits from the openness and transparency of their fellow partners. The program has received awards and positioned Alentejo wine production as a pioneer in Portugal, surpassing other regions. All brands and producers involved in the program have seen commercial and economic benefits since its inception. While the sustainability seal holds more significance on the international stage, it has not necessarily led to a notable increase in national sales. The program's dissemination is of utmost importance for enhancing the region's reputation at both the regional and national levels.

3.5.6.3 TRUST BUILDING

Improving social capital through interactive innovation necessitates charismatic and dynamic leadership capable of creating a social space to foster shared values among all participants. To implement WASP principles and certify the final product, members must conduct an annual self-assessment based on a standardized method that has been collectively developed and continuously refined. This self-assessment is organized into three categories: (I) viticulture, (II) cellar, and (III) viticulture & cellar (Fig. 3.35). After completing the self-assessment, each member receives a "General Sustainability Category" ranking, falling within one of four defined ranges. The goal is to continually enhance the practices of each member to achieve the highest category (>86% of criteria fulfilled = "developed"). Trust is therefore pivotal in achieving shared objectives and advancing the long-term sustainability of the entire sector.



Figure 3-35

Sectors of the self-assessment of Wines of Alentejo Sustainability Program (WASP, 2021).

3.5.7 REGIONAL EMBEDDEDNESS

The program's strong regional embeddedness is evident, as it was initiated by CVRS, an organization that already enjoyed a favorable reputation among stakeholders in the wine production sector. WASP aspires to achieve a 60% participation rate among all wine producers in Alentejo, with the aim of transforming the voluntary and free initiative into a mandatory and sector-wide standard (Muñoz-Rojas et al., 2022).

3.5.8 GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The project coordinator at CVRA plays a central role in the application, implementation, and ongoing operation of the program. According to the project report submitted to the European Commission (the public funding agency), this role involves a constant commitment to innovation, establishing connections with various organizations, revitalizing prior efforts that were not fulfilled or continue to be successful, and addressing tasks that have not yet been undertaken but hold potential importance. The project coordinator's efforts are pivotal for the program's success. At the outset of the process, CVRA and its collaborators established broad objectives for the program. Over time, these objectives have been evaluated and updated through participatory processes. It is essential that these objectives enjoy broad consensus among WASP members. The program places a strong emphasis on equality, ensuring that all members, regardless of the scale of their wine production or their political leanings, have equal rights and opportunities within the program's objectives.

3.5.9 PUBLIC SUPPORT (LOCAL GOVERNMENTS/NATIONAL POLICIES)

The initial phase of the program was funded through Alentejo 2020, which is part of the wider European Structural and Investment Funds framework aligned with the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy (European Commission, 2014). These funds are dedicated to enhancing competitiveness and internationalization of rural markets, promoting social inclusion and employment, fostering sustainability and resource efficiency, and generating human capital. WASP secured public funding amounting to 120,000€ for the first two and a half years (2015-2017). The funding application, developed in collaboration with a consulting firm, was designed to serve two main objectives: (I) supporting economic actors in improving the environmental, economic, and social performance of the wine industry and (II) bolstering the regional wine brand from Alentejo in domestic and international markets. The combination of sustainability labeling requirements within the sector and relatively low initiation costs through voluntary certification contributions by members rendered the application appealing to funding agencies.

3.5.10 SOCIAL CAPITAL BUILDING: CONCLUDING REMARKS

National legislation is perceived as insufficiently implemented or inadequate at the regional level to establish sustainable production criteria within Alentejo's wine sector. Consequently, the WASP project proposal for Alentejo 2020 was crafted to surpass the defined minimum requirements set for producers. The impact of the WASP program extends well beyond the initial minimum sustainability requirements of the project's phase. This is made possible through the continual enhancement of the program's sustainability criteria, emphasizing that even when certain criteria are met, opportunities for further improvement should always be explored. This progress is reflected in the increase of self-assessment criteria, growing from an initial 108 in the 11 primary intervention chapters to the current 171 in the 18 secondary intervention chapters. Each participant evaluates their wine-producing activities based on these intervention chapters. The dissemination of the results of these self-assessments has contributed to a consistent increase in program participation and the development of additional evaluation criteria.

In a survey conducted by the University of Évora, participants specified the socioecological challenges to which they have made positive contributions through the program. According to their views, the program has raised awareness regarding environmental degradation, particularly in relation to climate change, emphasized the importance of local identity and market access amid globalization, promoted sustainable water management, advocated for a paradigm shift toward more sustainable agricultural practices, improved decision-making and planning processes, and enhanced the supply chain. The primary reasons for the program's success include the high social capital potential among initiating actors and collaborating partners, access to public funding, and the increasing international demand for sustainability certificates in wine production. Ultimately, the business-oriented focus of key stakeholders and actors ensures the continuity of the process once the project has concluded, as economic sustainability remains at the forefront of their priorities.

3.6 PORTUGAL (II) COOPERATIVA INTEGRAL MINGA – AN ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIC MODEL *(DOMINIK NOLL AND MARIA RIVERA)*

3.6.1 INTRODUCTION

Cooperativa Integral Minga, located in southern Portugal, is a local multisectoral cooperative that provides infrastructure, personal and financial support for agriculture, commercialization, housing and construction, and services. The cooperative's primary goal is to facilitate sustainable development in economic, social, and environmental terms within the municipality while also offering support for similar initiatives outside the municipality. In this chapter, we introduce the region of Montemor-o-Novo, provide a detailed description of the cooperative's structure and main characteristics, and emphasize the factors related to social capital that have played a significant role in its formation and development. Additionally, we highlight other factors that have presented challenges to the initiative.

3.6.2 REGION



Figure 3-36

Montemor-o-Novo (Wikimedia Commons – Vitor Oliveira)

The municipality of Montemor-o-Novo is situated in Alentejo Central, a NUTS-3 region in the southern part of Portugal. The municipality ranks as the 7th largest in the country, covering an area of 1,233 km². As of 2021, it had a resident population of 15,804 inhabitants (INE 2022). Within the municipality, you'll find the city of Montemor-o-Novo, which had a resident population of nearly 9,000 (according to the 2011 census - 8,681). The municipality comprises 43 settlements, each with a population of less than 2,000 inhabitants.

Approximately 2,000 individuals reside in isolated settlements that are nestled within the rural agricultural landscape. The municipality of Montemor-o-Novo stands out as a unique case in Alentejo, marked by various positive socioeconomic and environmental accomplishments in recent decades. While most municipalities in Alentejo grappled with several decades of demographic and economic decline, Montemor-o-Novo successfully stabilized its employment rates and population figures from 1993 to 2009. This achievement resulted from a combination of regional advantages and significant social innovations supported by existing social capital. However, the most recent census data indicates that the trend of decline has resumed, with the municipality experiencing a 9% reduction in its population between 2011 and 2021 (INE 2022).

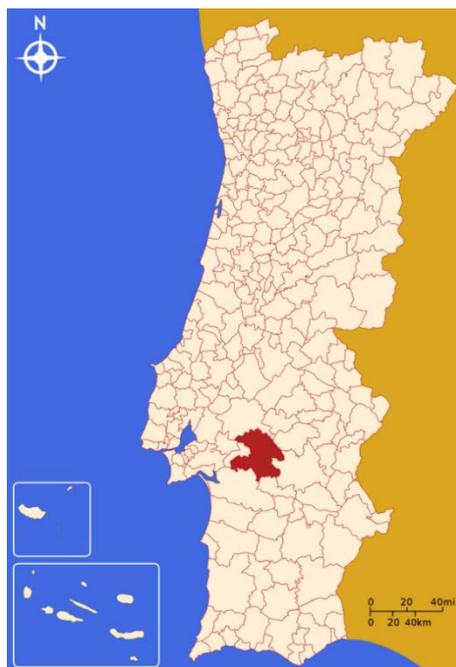


Figure 3-37
Montemor-o-Novo district, Alentejo, Portugal (Wikimedia Commons - Rei-artur)

Montemor-o-Novo is strategically located in the Lisbon-Spain corridor, in close proximity to the cities of Vendas Novas (approximately 23 km away) and Évora (around 30 km away). It lies directly between Lisbon and Elvas, both approximately 100 km away. This geographical positioning has been advantageous for economic development incentives, particularly since the late 1990s when a highway connection was established, facilitating efficient transportation along this axis. Approximately 30% of the municipal area is designated as part of the Natura 2000 network, with approvals granted in 1997 (Sítio de Cabrela) and 2000 (Sítio do Monfurado). Additionally, the municipality is home to 42 National Monuments and Buildings of public interest (Câmara Municipal de Montemor-o-Novo, 2007). Between 1991 and 2001, a series of significant social innovation initiatives emerged, which not only solidified existing innovations but also contributed to new economic, social, cultural, and ecological changes in Montemor-o-Novo, changes that continue to evolve and shape the region to this day.

3.6.3 PRECONDITIONS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN THIS REGION

The municipality boasts relatively high levels of social capital, which can be harnessed and further reinforced to drive regional development. The local development strategy adopted by the City Council in the 1990s focuses on diversifying the regional economy, implementing specialized health services, preserving the historical heritage, supporting regional tourism, and promoting cultural and artistic activities (Câmara Municipal de Montemor-o-Novo, 2007). As highlighted by André et al. (2013), the implementation of cultural and artistic initiatives, in particular, has contributed to the potential for social innovation within the

municipality. These social innovation initiatives have created an environment conducive to new innovations, even at the rural and agricultural level.

The city of Montemor-o-Novo is characterized by a strong presence of an agrarian and conservative culture, with many residents having ties to property and land ownership. This often results in established relations of interdependence and occasional conflict with the urban culture that is not linked to agriculture. However, democratic initiatives and the influx of new residents have contributed to the rejuvenation and reinforcement of a more urban culture, making the social environment more receptive to innovative ideas. This influx has also increased and enriched the social capital of the region. The most significant initiatives that have contributed to social innovation between 1991 and 2001 are outlined in Table 3-3.

Table 3-3: List of most important democratic initiatives in Montemor-o-Novo from 1991 to 2001.

Initiative	Year
APORMOR – Association of producers of the rural world of the region of Montemor-o-Novo	1990
Workshops of the convent – Cultural association of art and communication	1996
Almaçor – Cooperative of Culture, Education and Training (CRL)	1996
Ciranda – Association of artisans and plastic artists of Montemor-o-Novo	1997
Theatron – Cultural association	1998
MONTEMORMEL – Association of beekeepers of Montemor-o-Novo	1999
Space and Time – Cultural association at rural and agricultural level	2001
Barn of Arts – Cooperative of fine arts and crafts of Montemor-o-Novo	2003
Wild Mount	2004
Alma d’Arame – Cultural association and puppet theatre	2006
Middle Ash	2011
The Brand – Local development association	n.a.

These economic, social, cultural, and ecological dynamics attracted new permanent and temporary inhabitants who settled in Montemor-o-Novo, either with primary or secondary residences. Furthermore, a more mobile population of artists, technicians, and specialists from various professions enriched the social capital of the region through their active participation and influence on the social and cultural life of both the city and the municipality.

However, this positive trend was abruptly interrupted by the global financial crisis that began in the USA in 2008, which pushed Portugal into a deep recession and triggered a sovereign debt crisis from 2011 to 2014. This crisis had a particularly adverse impact on several economic sectors in the municipality, including civil construction, public administration, and business ownership. The consequences included business closures, a reduction in the employment rate, and an increased risk of poverty. Only the service sector exhibited a higher employment rate in 2011 compared to 2001. The crisis led to a resurgence of the demographic recession that had characterized the municipality before the aforementioned initiatives. After 2010, net migration turned negative for the first time since 2001 and reached its highest levels in 2014 and 2015, resulting in a rapidly aging population.

These developments played a crucial role in the establishment of the Montemor-o-Novo Citizenship Network (CM) in 2010. This civic initiative aimed to organize citizen participation in decisions related to the economic, social, cultural, and environmental development of the municipality, as well as the implementation of local initiatives. In the same year, CM was invited by the municipality to contribute to the formulation of the Local Agenda 21 and subsequently undertook various innovative actions in the following years.

In 2014, which marked the peak impact of the sovereign debt crisis in Portugal, the Cultural Association Oficinas do Convento organized a forum of cooperatives in Montemor-o-Novo in collaboration with the municipality, ISCTE/University of Lisbon, and nearby parishes. The objective of this forum was to seek solutions within the social and solidarity economy to address various aspects, including "production, distribution, consumption, housing, healthcare, and education," in response to the effects of the crisis. The forum brought together experts and activists in the fields of social and solidarity economy and cooperativism from both Portugal and Spain. It laid the foundation for the establishment of the Cooperativa Integral Minga in July 2015.

3.6.4 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

3.6.4.1 INTENTION

Cooperativa Integral Minga, referred to as Minga in this text, is a multi-sectoral cooperative consisting of four cooperative branches and their respective sections: agriculture, commercialization, housing and construction, and services. On their website, Minga expresses its mission as follows:

"Minga is a self-financed project, which primarily relies on the enthusiasm of its members. At Minga, each member is a prosumer: they can produce or consume in the different branches of the cooperative. Cooperation makes it easier for businesses to progress, contrary to the prevailing entrepreneurial vision that isolates each person in their individual company and limits their ability to develop a project. By respecting individual needs and perspectives and allowing each member to interact with the cooperative in their own way, it becomes clear that together, much more can be achieved than individually."

The term "Minga" has a dual meaning. It originates from the Ecuadorian expression that signifies collective actions. Additionally, it derives from the Portuguese verb "mingar" or "minguar," which means "to dwindle" and is associated with the philosophy of degrowth (Kallis, 2018). The concept of an integral cooperative was first developed in Cataluña, Spain, in 2010 by the Cooperativa Integral Catalana. The idea behind this type of cooperative is to address all aspects of urban and rural living by aiming to meet all the necessary requirements for a sustainable life. This includes supporting people in production, sales, wealth creation, education, healthcare, and access to housing (Gonçalves, 2016). Another source of inspiration for the founders of Minga was the solidarity bank project of Banco

Palmas do Brasil, which promotes local production and consumption through the use of their own currency and a microfinance system (e.g., de França Filho et al., 2012). While Minga was the first integral cooperative of its kind in Portugal, the concept is based on solutions that were already present in various scattered initiatives.

Minga is guided by the promotion of sustainable practices in all three dimensions of the sustainability triangle: ecological, economic, and social. Its multidisciplinary team collaborates on a strategy that focuses on reducing intermediation between producers and consumers, expanding services in various areas such as housing, education, health, and well-being, facilitating access to locally sourced products and services, and promoting self-employment.

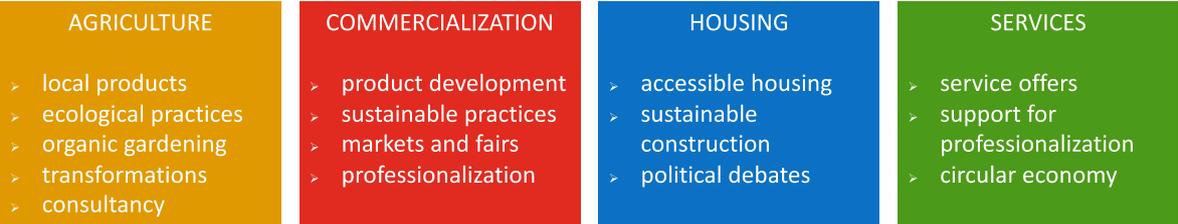


Figure 3-38

Cooperativa Integral Minga's sectors of intervention.

The initial idea that began to take shape in 2013 was to create an association. However, after numerous conversations with locals and a thorough investigation of the preconditions in the region, the founding members realized that people needed support in production, sales, wealth generation, and access to housing. An integrative cooperative was deemed to be a much better fit for fulfilling these needs than an association, and it was officially formed in 2015. While cooperatives may have fallen out of favor in recent decades, they provide an ideal model because they are closer to local producers and consumers, helping to keep the value within the local economy and community (Jorge Gonçalves, personal conversation).

Minga has implemented a balanced system in which every member has an account within the cooperative. When a member sells a product or service, their balance increases. They can then use this balance to either reimburse their costs for other consumed services or products in Euros or MOR (the local currency of Montemor-o-Novo), pay salaries to other members through full-time or part-time contracts, or keep it within the internal balance system offered by the cooperative. This approach encourages Minga's members to spend their money within the cooperative, thereby ensuring that the value remains within the region. The cooperative operates with financial independence and funds itself exclusively through admission fees, which represent a minor percentage of every invoice issued through the cooperative. These funds are used to cover expenses such as the accountant's services, the part-time treasurer's role, the invoicing system, website maintenance, and email hosting activities.

3.6.4.2 PARTICIPATING ACTORS AND INITIATION OF THE PROJECT

The initial idea began to take shape during informal group meetings in 2010/2011 among a group of young Portuguese citizens who had spent some time living abroad. Upon their return to Portugal, they began exploring how people could lead more socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable lifestyles, and how the issue of land abandonment in the interior regions of Portugal could be addressed. This group experienced continuous growth, established social media channels, and created the informal Center for Research, Culture, and Sustainability (CICS). Members of CICS submitted integrated regional development project proposals to several City Councils in the interior of Portugal. These proposals encompassed a wide range of ideas, including sustainable architecture, microeconomies, renewable energy initiatives, bicycle repair assistance, and many others. One of these proposals was approved by the City Council of Montemor-o-Novo in 2012. Although the founding members held additional meetings with City Councils from various cities in Portugal, they ultimately chose Montemor-o-Novo. However, the founders emphasized that this model could work anywhere if adapted to local circumstances (Jorge Gonçalves, personal communication). The reasons for selecting Montemor-o-Novo were diverse, but the founders emphasized that even though different regions offer different preconditions, such a project could be initiated anywhere if the needs of the local community are well understood.



Figure 3-39

Minga store in Montemor-o-Novo (Minga, 2021).

Later, some founding members began exploring opportunities to permanently settle within the municipality. These members initiated and participated in several social innovation activities, including the creation of a vegetarian canteen, participation in the Montemor-o-Novo forum in 2014, and the organization of a course on economic degrowth in collaboration with ISCTE/Universidade de Lisboa. The canteen opened in 2014 and was the first project to establish connections with local producers in Montemor-o-Novo.

Subsequently, a store was opened in the town in 2015, which became an important gathering place for the community.

Initially, the residents of Montemor-o-Novo were hesitant about the cooperative concept since it was unfamiliar to them. Building relationships of trust was crucial for the success of the cooperative. Since the founders were newcomers to the town, trust and relationships needed time to develop, and the cooperative's store played a significant role in this process. This illustrates how social action and social capital were enhanced as a result of new individuals relocating to the town. These newcomers brought with them new ideas, motivations, and processes, leading to the creation of new networks and ultimately increasing trust among community members.

2008/2014 GLOBAL, NATIONAL AND LOCAL ECONOMIC CONTEXT	2011 CREATION AND ORGANIZATION OF THE INITIAL GROUP	2012 SELECTION OF MONTEMOR-O-NOVO AS FINAL LOCATION	2013 SETTLING IN MONTEMOR-O-NOVO AND FIRST INITIATIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global financial and economic crisis with start in the USA in 2007/2008 Impacts of the global financial crisis on national level and Portuguese sovereign debt crisis Local dynamics at the social, economic, ecological, political and cultural level and impacts of crisis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal contacts between young people (graduates) who returned to Portugal from studying and working abroad Growth of group (movement) and use of social networks to connect and disseminate Informal creation of the Research, Culture and Sustainability Center (CICS) Proposals for integrated regional development projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choice of Montemor-o-Novo based on response from city council and local social dynamics Preliminary proposal for the integrated regional development project as basis for CICS Official meeting in Montemor-o-Novo to debate the project proposal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group members move their residencies to Montemor-o-Novo Creation of a vegetarian canteen on the premises of the "Oficinas do Convento Association – 2013"
2014 COOPERATIVES FORUM	2015 OFFICIAL CONSTITUTION OF THE COOPERATIVE	2018 NEW STATUTES	2020 COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND ECONOMIC CRISIS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in the Montemor-o-Novo Cooperatives Forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization of a course on economic degrowth Constitution of the Cooperativa Integral Minga (CIM) Opening of the store and integral space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alteration of the statutes and election of new social bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New context of COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis

Figure 3-40
Landmarks for the creation of Cooperativa Integral Minga.

3.6.4.3 PROMOTING AND HINDERING FACTORS

The most significant challenges included the initial lack of trust among residents and founders, as well as the initial lack of financial support, which had negative effects by limiting investments in necessary equipment. The founding members initially struggled with managing the collective decision-making process, as none of them had prior

experience with such processes. Additionally, opening the store posed organizational challenges due to a lack of knowledge about its operation.

Rural communities often exhibit skepticism and resistance to adopting new ideas, particularly if those ideas come from outside sources. If proposing new training and initiatives, caution is necessary when dealing with farmers who tend to be very skeptical. Given that many members of the cooperative are considered "neo-locals," meaning newcomers to the area, locals were even more hesitant to embrace their proposals and ideas. Initially, reaching small-scale farmers in the region proved difficult, and the rapid growth of the cooperative complicated internal communication. To address this, a communication group was formed to facilitate internal communication processes.

As the number of regional members began to increase, membership was restricted to locals, while support for non-locals shifted toward assisting them in founding their own cooperatives rather than integrating them into Minga. A continuous challenge is the shortage of financial resources, as the cooperative would benefit from employing more people directly to better support individual projects.

Table 3-4: Promoting and hindering factors for the foundation of Minga.

Promoting factors (+)	Hindering factors (-)
low initial costs due to a light structure	Too early opening of the store was financially difficult
great flexibility and autonomy to use the cooperative for developing projects	Initial lack of confidence in people
opening of the store for enhancing personal exchange within the community	lack of financial support in the beginning
Dept crisis in Portugal contributed to the success of the cooperative	lack of experience of how to manage a collective process
Acceptance of proposal by the city council	lack of knowledge of how to run a store
Regional specifics of Montemor-o-Novo	difficulties in internal communication due to large group
	mistrust and slow adaptation of new ideas in the local community
	Too rapid growth of cooperative

3.6.5 MINGA’S ACTIVITIES ENHANCING SOCIAL CAPITAL

Effective networking is a fundamental aspect of social capital, and Minga actively promotes network creation among locals who wish to start their own businesses. By using the cooperative as a platform and network, members can initiate and develop their businesses with the support and financial structure provided by Minga. This approach effectively enhances social capital, as members can leverage the cooperative's network and financial

resources to build resilient and sustainable businesses. Through the cooperative, members gain easier access to a diverse range of professions and products, each with its own individual brands and names. This arrangement fosters creative potential and allows members to maintain ownership of their businesses while utilizing the cooperative to establish a solid foundation.

Minga has two types of members: effective members (co-workers) with voting rights who register in one or more sections, and collaborating partners who contribute donations (either monetary or in the form of voluntary work). Collaborating partners can participate in general meetings but do not have voting rights for internal decisions and elections. Co-workers may have fixed-term employment contracts with the cooperative or invoice joint purchases or sales of goods and services through the cooperative. This flexibility enables individuals to pursue multiple professions and reduce costs by sharing management and administrative expenses among members. Companies can be registered as trademarks within the cooperative, providing services on behalf of the cooperative itself. This streamlined process simplifies registration, especially for businesses offering a wide range of services or products.

Minga's integral space next to the store is available for rent by both members and non-members for regular socio-cultural activities and workshops. The cooperative organizes training events for the broader community and offers co-workers free attendance, serving as an opportunity to promote the cooperative. The store, which allows small-scale farmers to sell their products, plays a central role in supporting local microenterprises, strengthening community relationships, and providing food security, particularly during times of crisis. It also serves as a critical communication platform, especially for individuals who do not use digital media. The store has contributed to the acquisition of new board members, increased visibility, and integration of the cooperative within the local community. In recent years, the store's visitor numbers have grown substantially, enhancing the cooperative's regional visibility. Additionally, Minga now operates an online store to further expand its reach (<https://mingamontemor.pt/lojaonline/>).



Figure 3-41

Minga integral space (Minga, 2021)

Minga actively maintains communication channels through its social media platforms, utilizing its website, and planning to create a bimonthly brochure that provides information about its members and addresses topics of interest. Additionally, the cooperative sends out newsletters to its co-workers on a weekly or biweekly basis. An initiative known as "Dominga" fosters interaction among members and non-members by organizing gatherings on Sundays, complete with picnic tables and cultural programs, creating a space for exchange and community engagement.

Minga's success has garnered recognition both within Portugal and internationally, contributing to the formation of an international cooperative network. As a result, numerous individuals and organizations have approached the cooperative's governing body seeking guidance on how to establish similar projects in other regions. The concept of integral cooperatives has been gaining traction in Portugal, and members of Minga have been actively offering training sessions and support activities to facilitate the replication of this model in other municipalities across the country.

3.6.5.1 ENHANCING COOPERATION

The cooperative initially began as a volunteer project but has gradually professionalized its operations in recent years. This evolution has led to increased participation, a growing number of co-workers, and the formation of more working groups that extend beyond the core sections of the cooperative. As members are encouraged not only to consume products and services within the cooperative but also to contribute by providing their own services and products, they effectively become "prosumers." This shift towards prosumerism personalizes the economy and underscores the importance of trust and shared values, as highlighted by Gonçalves (2016).

In recent years, Minga has diversified its range of products and developed more efficient strategies to benefit its members. New projects have emerged, including the production of textiles, jams, sweets, homemade preserves, and cosmetics. Additionally, the cooperative has expanded its efforts in knowledge dissemination, particularly in the realms of ecology, the environment, and human well-being. Regular meetings and conversations on a wide range of topics, such as energy, health, the economy, and housing, have played a significant role in fostering closer bonds within the group and bridging gaps between members from different professional and ideological backgrounds. Integral cooperatives like Minga offer advantages in times of crisis, as they encompass a broad spectrum of microenterprises capable of issuing bills through the cooperative. This diversity enables them to sell various services and products, making them more resilient than monosectoral companies. The cooperative actively manages cooperation among its diverse network of members, allowing them to provide mutual support. This resilience was evident during the COVID-19 crisis, as Minga continued its sustainable economic development throughout 2020 and 2021.

Looking ahead, the members of the cooperative recognize the need to develop tools that facilitate the achievement of their goals. Jorge Gonçalves emphasizes that collaboration is key to addressing the challenges affecting their lives. Cooperation, he asserts, goes beyond

being an ideological perspective; it is a practical approach to problem-solving. By fostering communication with peers, identifying common issues, and working together to overcome them, members of Minga are able to navigate the complexities of their cooperative journey.

3.6.5.2 TRUST BUILDING

Trust, a fundamental component of social capital, holds immense importance for the sustainability of a cooperative. Establishing trust within the local community, particularly among farmers, has been a persistent challenge for Minga. For many individuals, distinguishing between a cooperative and a conventional retail establishment is not always straightforward. To cultivate trust among its members and address potential conflicts, Minga has implemented several practices. The cooperative conducts monthly meetings and biannual Co-workers' or Cooperators' Days. During these gatherings, all members engage in reflection, discussing the cooperative's past, present, and future. These meetings serve as a vital foundation for building trust and preemptively resolving conflicts. It's worth noting that, thus far, the cooperative has managed to avoid significant internal conflicts, a testament to its proactive approach.

Fostering trust within the cooperative also hinges on the willingness of all members to share any knowledge or training they receive. This culture of knowledge sharing ensures that everyone within the cooperative benefits from the expertise of others. Minga organizes regular workshops in the Minga integral Space, covering topics such as cooperation, non-violent communication, decision-making processes, the use of microorganisms in agriculture, sustainable housing, renewable energies, and more. While these workshops are primarily designed for integral members, they are open to anyone interested. The cooperative recognizes that providing multiple avenues for interaction and learning is essential for facilitating trust-building among both members and non-members. This commitment to openness and knowledge sharing contributes to the development of trust within the cooperative and fosters trust between its members and the broader community.

3.6.6 REGIONAL EMBEDDEDNESS

From its inception, Minga's founding members placed a strong emphasis on the regional nature of their products and operations. When establishing the canteen, they diligently sourced local products characterized by high quality and short transportation distances. This commitment to regionality remains a central tenet of Minga's operations today. Members of the cooperative firmly believe in supporting local producers and are open to orders from outside the municipality, particularly for similar cooperatives or initiatives in neighboring regions. Minga is deeply committed to aligning with the social needs of the community. As a result, it has ventured into areas such as housing and agricultural production, aiming to address local needs and benefit the community. Over time, Minga has witnessed the growing integration of both its members and the cooperative itself within the

local community. This integration has been facilitated by strengthening interpersonal relationships, further solidifying Minga's roots in the region.

3.6.7 GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Minga operates under a well-defined governance structure. The cooperative is governed by several key bodies, including: The Board of the General Meeting, consisting of a president and vice president; The Board of Directors, which comprises the president, vice-president, treasurers, and members; The Fiscal Council, led by the chairman and vice-chairman, along with other members.

In 2018, the cooperative updated its statutes and elected new corporate bodies after its initial four-year term. Transparency and a bottom-up approach are central principles in Minga's management. The cooperative's democratic organization aims to provide every co-worker with opportunities to participate, contribute, and take ownership of their own projects. Minga itself does not have specific objectives other than facilitating exchange between individuals and enabling them to achieve their goals.

3.6.8 PUBLIC SUPPORT (LOCAL GOVERNMENTS/NATIONAL POLICIES)

Minga's early formation received support through the European degrowth network. This support was instrumental in legally establishing the cooperative and acquiring the premises for the store and integral working space. While public support played a significant role, Minga also values its independence from political influences and local government. The cooperative maintains a neutral relationship with the local government, which has not provided financial support. Minga's independence from such support is crucial to ensure that its members can openly express their opinions. Additionally, Minga seeks to engage with the national government, particularly in areas that align with its strategies.

3.6.9 SOCIAL CAPITAL BUILDING: CONCLUDING REMARKS

Cooperativa Integral Minga emerged during a period of crisis marked by societal and environmental challenges, including high unemployment rates, income instability, obstacles faced by micro-producers, housing difficulties, and the need for sustainable and organic farming practices. The economic crisis in Portugal had both negative and positive effects on regional development, acting as a catalyst for Minga's formation as a response to pressing needs. Several factors contributed to Minga's success, including its low initial setup costs due to a lean organizational structure, flexibility, autonomy for project development, and the establishment of a physical store, which facilitated face-to-face interactions. In retrospect, some founding members believe that opening the store prematurely, given limited financial resources and high initial efforts, may not have been ideal. They suggest

that initially focusing on local market engagement and later expanding with a more stable financial base might have been a more effective approach.

One of Minga's ongoing challenges is to gain the trust and confidence of the local agricultural community. As a next step, the cooperative aims to address the housing problem within the municipality, helping individuals who struggle to afford rent or secure financing for housing and infrastructure needed for their businesses. In conclusion, Minga continues to be a vital player in fostering social capital within the region of Montemor-o-Novo and beyond. It brings together individuals with diverse skills and professional backgrounds, offering regular training and workshops to build social capital and address pressing community needs. Minga's commitment to regionality and its democratic governance structure contribute to its enduring impact on the local community.

3.7 TÜRKIYE (I) BADEMLI NURSERY AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

COOPERATIVE (FATMA HANDAN GIRAY, ÇIĞDEM AYDOĞAN, KEREM MERTOĞLU AND ENGIN GÖKHAN KULAN)

3.7.1 INTRODUCTION

The Bademli Nursery Agricultural Development Cooperative, commonly referred to as the Bademli Coop, was established in 1968 in the town of Bademli, situated in the Ödemiş district of İzmir. İzmir is renowned as one of the pioneering provinces in Türkiye for the cooperative movement (Şahin et al., 2013). The Aegean region, where Bademli is located, boasts a relatively higher level of education and industrialization, creating a favorable environment for initiatives of this nature. Initially focused on sapling production, the Bademli Cooperative has since diversified its activities across various agricultural sectors, all while maintaining a steadfast commitment to safeguarding the rights of producers and contributing to local and regional development. Remarkably, the Bademli Coop stands as a prime example of social capital, emphasizing cooperation throughout its operations, from decision-making to execution, and has sustained its successful journey since its inception in 1968.

3.7.2 REGION

The Aegean Region, situated in the western part of Türkiye, boasts the country's lengthiest coastline and is characterized by a typical Mediterranean climate featuring dry summers and wet winters. Geomorphological characteristics of the coastline allow the Mediterranean climate to extend deeply into the region. The Aegean region has well-developed economic sectors, including agriculture, industry, and tourism. The climatic conditions in the Aegean region are conducive to agricultural production, allowing for two annual harvests of a wide array of products. Additionally, the region hosts thriving industries and is renowned as a popular tourist destination due to its rich historical, cultural, and natural heritage.

The Bademli Cooperative is situated in the Bademli neighborhood, within the Ödemiş district of İzmir province, nestled in the heart of the Aegean Region of Türkiye. Its geographical coordinates are latitude 38° 59' North and longitude 27° 16' East. Ödemiş district itself is located in the southeastern part of İzmir province and is approximately 113 kilometers away from the city of İzmir (refer to Figure 3-42 for location details).

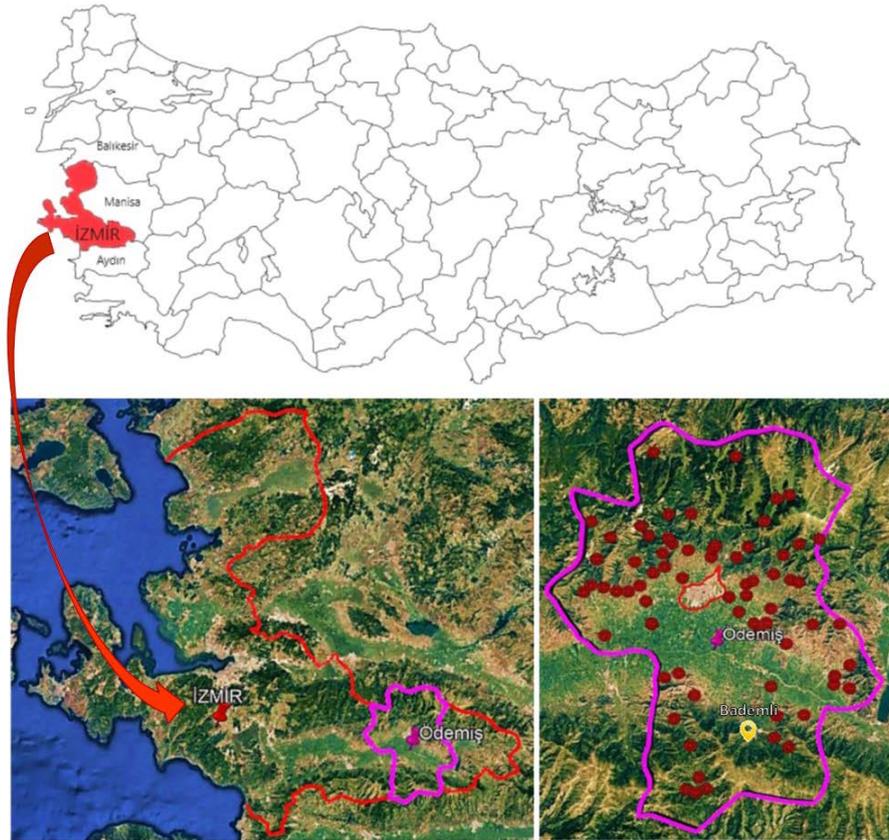


Figure 3-42

Geographical location of İzmir and Ödemiş (Google Earth, 2020; Yıldırım and Hazal Kolanya, 2020 with modifications)

The Ödemiş district had a population of 132,876 people in 2019, comprising 99 settlements, including 16 central neighborhoods, nine towns, and 74 villages. Ödemiş stands out as İzmir's region with the highest number of farmers, accounting for 12.9% of its population. However, the rural population of Ödemiş has experienced a decline, decreasing from 57,034 in 2007 to 50,102 in 2019, while simultaneously witnessing an increase in urban population (İZKA, 2015; TÜİK, 2020; Yıldırım and Hazar Kalonya, 2020).

Until 2012, Bademli was categorized as a "belde," a small administrative unit between a village and a town. However, in 2013, it was reclassified as one of the 99 administrative neighborhoods following the enactment of Law no: 6360, which revised and expanded the responsibilities of metropolitan municipalities in rural areas. Bademli is situated 21 km away from the town of Ödemiş, and it's an ancient settlement nestled on the northern slopes of the Aydın mountains, where four streams converge to form a delta. In 2012, when it was still a "belde," its population stood at 7,367. However, after its transformation into a neighborhood and the subsequent division into five separate villages, its population has

dwindled to the current count of 2,494 in 2021 (TURKSTAT, 2022). Administrative changes aside, the neighborhood has been grappling with increasing migration from rural to urban areas, resulting in a population decline.

Ödemiş is characterized by both rural characteristics and urban amenities, as it occupies a position on the rural-urban fringe. According to the OECD classification, Ödemiş district falls into the medium-level rural region category, with 15% to 50% of its population residing in rural areas (Yıldırım and Hazar Kalonya, 2020). Despite having a larger population in the urban area, Ödemiş still hosts a peasant population that engages in seasonal migration between rural and urban areas. It's noteworthy that those who migrate from Bademli to the town of Ödemiş often cite the opportunity to continue agricultural production and enjoy a more convenient life in the district capital as reasons for their migration. This dynamic results in seasonal movements between rural and urban areas, as the livelihood and primary employment activities of these individuals remain rooted in agriculture and seasonal labor (Yıldırım and Hazar Kalonya, 2020).

The socio-cultural landscape in Bademli is dominated by Aegean culture, which is evident in various aspects such as handicrafts, livelihoods, crop diversification, and gastronomy. Handicrafts like needlework, lace-making, cross-stitching, and calculation craft (a traditional embroidery) have historical roots but are not as vibrant as they once were. Another traditional practice in the area is "sırıkçılık," which refers to pole-raising. These poles are tools used for collecting olives by shaking the trees. Many of these poles are produced in Bademli, serving as both a source of livelihood and a preserved traditional activity (Kut Görgün and Yörür, 2018).

While the economic foundation of Ödemiş is primarily rooted in the agricultural sector, livestock and agriculture-based industries have seen development in recent years (İzmir Metropolitan Municipality, 2016). Considering the composition of the labor force at the Ödemiş district level, the agriculture, hunting, forestry, and fishing sector accounted for 70% in 2000 and continues to be the predominant profession in the district today (İZKA, 2011). The economy of Bademli relies heavily on agriculture, with key agricultural products being cherries, chestnuts, walnuts, and plums. Moreover, the region has gained significance in arboriculture (Ödemiş Municipality, 2014). In fact, the name "Bademli" itself translates to "with almonds" or "having almonds" in Turkish. The natural climatic conditions in the area make it well-suited for sapling production, both from seeds and through cuttings. Notably, there are sizable nurseries in Bademli that contribute to 60% of the country's sapling production, signifying that this small town alone produces more than half of Türkiye's total sapling production (Şahin et al., 2013).

3.7.3 PRECONDITIONS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN THE REGION

Bademli has a rich history and was known as "Potamia," meaning "the land of rivers" in Greek. Throughout its history, it has been under the control of various civilizations, including the Lydians, Persians, Hellenistic civilization, Romans, Byzantines (since 395), and Turks (since 1080). It gained municipality status in 1932. The diverse historical influences on

Bademli have shaped it into a multicultural town, contributing significantly to the region's social capital potential. Beyond its historical and cultural background, the town's natural assets also play a crucial role in fostering social capital. Natural factors are instrumental in the development of rural settlements and their cultural evolution.

Water, in particular, stands as the most vital natural environmental factor influencing the layout of rural settlements. It holds a direct connection with agricultural production in villages primarily dependent on agriculture and animal husbandry. Water not only determines the size, location, and sustainability of settlements but also contributes to the creation of shared spaces, such as fountains, troughs, wells, water mills, irrigation canals, and "sakana" (laundry areas), which are integral to social life (Usman, 2011). Furthermore, in addition to the need for irrigation in agricultural activities like fruit cultivation, nursery production demands labor for maintenance, fostering an environment conducive to increased social interaction. Bademli serves as a convergence point for various small-scale water resources from the region, forming streams and streamlets. The primary component is the Bademli stream, bearing the same name as the town. Other components and resources in the area include olive groves, nurseries, and orchards. The existence of water resources and irrigated farming, along with the cultivation of high-value crops that require labor-intensive production, not only serve as natural components and income sources for the region but also contribute to agricultural activities that necessitate knowledge, social interaction, and cooperation.

İzmir is renowned as one of the leading provinces in the cooperative movement. The region is home to other notable and motivating examples of cooperatives, such as the Tire Milk Cooperative, Bayındır Floriculture Cooperative, İğdeli Agricultural Development Cooperative, and Bademler Agricultural Development Cooperative.

3.7.4 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Bademli Nursery Agricultural Development Cooperative was established in 1968 and commenced its operations in 1970 (refer to Figure 3-43). The cooperative places a strong emphasis on arboriculture and provides support to sapling producers by offering various production inputs and assisting in resolving marketing challenges. While the cooperative initially focused on investing in fruit sapling and olive oil producers, it has also made necessary infrastructure investments in other agricultural branches. These investments include establishing a dairy business for dairy farmers, cold storage facilities for fruit sapling producers, a tissue culture laboratory, an agricultural research laboratory, an olive oil factory for olive producers, and an organization for fresh fruit sorting, storage, and packaging for fruit producers. The guiding principle or motto of the cooperative is "Unity creates strength."



Figure 3-43

*The logo of the Bademli Nursery
Agricultural Development Cooperative*

3.7.4.1 INTENTION

The founder and current president of the cooperative, Mr. Selcuk Bilgi, articulated the cooperative's founding purpose as generating income for local farmers. He stated:

"The cooperative was established in a region known for its cultivation of various fruits and vegetables, as well as modern animal husbandry practices. This region is responsible for producing 30-40% of the country's fruit saplings. The cooperative's goals include marketing its members' products in both domestic and international markets, fostering the growth of an agricultural industry aligned with its products in the region, ensuring that members meet global quality standards, comply with food safety regulations, and providing a range of services to members, including technical guidance, with the ultimate aim of achieving quality and sustainable production."

Initially, the cooperative facilitated sapling production with the active participation of local residents, providing them with various inputs and support. Their early production focused on saplings of apples, pears, walnuts, cherries, and pomegranates, drawing from local knowledge and expertise. Initially, their sales were primarily local, but over time, they improved their technology and production capacity, expanding their product distribution to nearly all regions of the country. Thanks to the cooperative's dedicated efforts and the hard work of its members, what was once an age-old and traditional profession among locals has evolved into small-scale family farms. The cooperative began by producing one million saplings in the early 1970s, and today, they annually produce approximately 20 million saplings and ornamental plants, along with various dairy products sourced from nearly 3 million liters of milk and 300,000 liters of olive oil.

3.7.4.2 CONCEPT OF BEST PRACTICE

The cooperative has made substantial investments not only in production but also in ensuring sustainability across its supply chain, from input utilization to waste management. Additionally, it has implemented measures to protect its members from price volatility. The cooperative's collaboration with the metropolitan municipality has played a crucial role in

achieving these priorities. Initially, social capital was not a primary focus for the cooperative, and it was not fully aware of it or did not actively work on converting informal social relationships into a willingness to cooperate. However, this aspect gradually developed through practical experience and learning by doing. While informal relationships existed, the desire to work together emerged as a result of the cooperative's success in economic development. There are no significant communication issues or serious conflicts among members or between members and the cooperative's management team. However, they do not regularly utilize social media and face challenges in communicating with consumers and the public.

In 2011, another cooperative with similar objectives was established in the same working areas, which was described as a political action. Nevertheless, this did not pose a significant problem. Notably, the cooperative excels in using technology and engaging in income-generating activities. In terms of marketing and supply chains for Business-to-Consumer (B2C) products, the cooperative has forged a strong relationship with the municipality. For example, various Short Food Supply Chain (SFSC) initiatives led by the municipality facilitate the direct connection between the cooperative's products and end consumers. Furthermore, the cooperative conducts research and development (R&D) work, including the production of virus-free saplings in biotechnology laboratories and the development of genotypes resistant to stress factors associated with climate change. In this context, the cooperative has initiated collaborations with researchers from universities, aiming to create an education model that integrates research and practical application. One noteworthy achievement from their R&D efforts is the development of a new walnut variety known as "Potamia Erdin walnuts" (refer to Figure 3-44). This new variety, the result of over a decade of selective breeding by the Bademli Cooperative, was officially registered in 2018 (Acar and Kazankaya, 2021).



Figure 3-44

Potamia Erdin walnut variety harvesting day (Türkiye Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 2022)

The Bademli Cooperative is one of only four cooperatives in Türkiye that has received financial support from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry for the implementation of

renewable energy initiatives. This support has enabled the cooperative to harness solar energy since 2017, not only enhancing energy efficiency but also addressing economic and environmental concerns. Additionally, the cooperative's provision of cold storage facilities has proven to be advantageous for sapling producers, as these facilities significantly elevate the quality of saplings and final products.

A study conducted by Karamursel et al. (2016) aimed to assess the status and challenges of fruit sapling cultivation in the Bademli/Ödemiş Region. The findings of this study revealed that 29% of the cooperative's members utilized the cold storage facility provided by the cooperative, while all non-members stored their saplings in open ditches. The cooperative places a strong emphasis on prioritizing human health. In their own words:

“Our priority is always human health. For this reason, we aim to make the best products in line with food safety and present them to our consumers. Currently, the dairy products produced by our cooperative prove this with their naturalness and taste, and with requests and comments. Although we had difficulty in competing with other products in the market in terms of cost, with our natural and high quality production method, we have gained a certain place in the market without compromising our principles”.

3.7.4.3 PROMOTING AND HINDERING FACTORS

The most pivotal factor contributing to the cooperative's success has been effective leadership and management based on trust and motivation. However, it is worth noting that these attributes might pose challenges in the future. From the inception of the cooperative, it has had the same president, primarily due to widespread satisfaction with his performance, which has fostered a strong sense of trust and stability within the cooperative. Nevertheless, the absence of other presidential candidates for five decades and the cooperative's reliance on a leader-centric approach could potentially become an issue in the future.

Promoting factors (+)	Hindering factors (-)
Good leadership and management through trust and motivation	Lack of social activities, particularly for young people
Good base for organizing common activities	Lack of playgrounds for children
Good networking with research bodies and local government	Protected status of houses makes repair works difficult
	Negative effects on rural services since revision of the Metropolitan Municipal Law in 2012
	Lack of promotional activities about Bademli
	Low social investment
	Leader-oriented management structure

3.7.4.4 BADEMLI COOPERATIVE'S MAIN ACTIVITIES ENHANCING SOCIAL CAPITAL

While the cooperative initially operated solely at the local level during its first 10-15 years, it has steadily expanded its reach across the entire country and ventured into international markets. Between 1984 and 1990, the cooperative exported 3 million saplings to Middle Eastern countries. More recently, it has initiated business activities in Central Asian markets. As domestic markets have experienced constraints since 2010, the cooperative has diversified its offerings by producing saplings and ornamental plants. Additionally, it occasionally engages in exports, depending on the availability of stocks (refer to Figure 3-45 for a visual representation of this expansion).



Figure 3-45

Sapling production in the cooperative's nursery

Recently, the cooperative has primarily focused its exports on Northern Iraq, Afghanistan, and Iran, with plans to target the Russian market in the short term. The income generated from the export of saplings amounts to approximately 1.5-2 million US dollars per year. Currently, the cooperative boasts a diverse portfolio of products, producing and selling saplings of over 100 plant species. This includes 27 fruit species such as apples, pears, quinces, cherries, sour cherries, plums, apricots, peaches, nectarines, walnuts, almonds, olives, grapes, persimmons, pomegranates, mandarins, oranges, lemons, grapefruits, kumquats, figs, chestnuts, mulberries, hawthorn, blackberries, raspberries, blueberries, and rosehips. Additionally, they offer about 80 varieties of ornamental plants, which accounts for more than half of the domestic production in the country.

Bademli is not only significant for horticulture but also for dairy and olive oil products. The region has a strong tradition of olive cultivation, with nearly every family owning an olive orchard. However, it was challenging for individual producers or households to effectively process and market olive oil. In response, the cooperative established an olive oil processing plant in 1974. They initially invested in a wet-pressing facility and later established a dried-extraction system factory, utilizing funds allocated to cooperatives in olive oil-producing regions. In 2002, the factory underwent modernization by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Livestock, resulting in the establishment of a Modular System Continuous Olive Oil factory with a capacity of 60 tons per day. This upgrade allowed the cooperative to balance the olive oil fatty acid limits of its producers, enabling them to produce early harvest, freshly pressed green olive oil. Presently, the cooperative's olive oil factory features cold, 3-phase, and stone pressing facilities, producing and supplying over 300 tons of olive oil to the market each year. The olive oil is packaged in bottles bearing the cooperative's two registered brands, Bademli and Potamia (refer to Figure 3-46).



Figure 3-46

Olive oil products of the cooperative with brand and bottling

Over the years, the Bademli Cooperative has diversified its investments to include livestock production. In 2008, they took a significant step by installing cooling tanks on the premises of their dairy producers. These tanks were positioned on the rooftops, facilitating a hygienic cold milk chain and streamlining the marketing process. The cooling tanks have a substantial capacity of 35 tons per day. In the subsequent year, 2009, the cooperative further expanded its operations by establishing a dairy products facility. This facility has a processing capacity of 15 tons per day, enabling the processing of milk collected from its members. With this infrastructure in place, the cooperative commenced the production of pasteurized milk, yogurt, ayran (a yogurt-based beverage), and butter (refer to Figure 3-47).



Figure 3-47

Dairy products of the cooperative and marketing in "Ege Et" (Aydın City Municipality Market)

In these operations, the cooperative meticulously adheres to mandatory sanitary standards and meets market requirements, adding significant value to the products provided by its members. Presently, more than five thousand dairy cattle contribute to the production of dairy products under the esteemed brand name of Bademli. These products are distributed not only to local shops but also to supermarket chains across the entire country, serving a nationwide customer base.

3.7.5 REGIONAL EMBEDDEDNESS

The Bademli Cooperative has actively fostered regional embeddedness by integrating a Local Development Model into its operations since 2007. Bademli has emerged as a positive example for new cooperative establishments in the region. For instance, the Initiative Production and Operation Cooperatives in Urla have looked to the Bademli Cooperative as a success story and source of inspiration. According to an interview with a member of the Urla municipal council by Çağlar (2019).

"we have studied the success stories of producer cooperatives in Akşehir (Konya), Tire (İzmir), and Bademli (İzmir). We realized that these cooperatives created a domino effect and paved the way for the development of Akşehir, Tire, and Bademli. We followed their organizational model to establish our cooperative."

3.7.6 GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Bademli Cooperative is governed by a management team consisting of ten individuals, including seven members of the steering committee and three members of the supervisory board. It employs 153 people and boasts approximately 450 active members. Within the cooperative, there is an R&D unit that conducts research spanning various domains, including cold storage possibilities, tissue culture, milk and dairy product processing, greenhouse cultivation, olive oil production, and solar energy production, in addition to

nursery production. Remarkably, the cooperative has had the same president, Mr. Selcuk Bilgi, since its inception, a period spanning over 50 years. Mr. Bilgi elucidates the governance process at the cooperative as follows:

"Cooperatives are required to hold either an election or a non-elective financial general assembly meeting annually. Representatives from the provincial (İzmir) and district (Ödemiş) directorates of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry also attend these meetings. To conduct general assembly meetings in cooperatives with up to 5,000 members, one-quarter of the total number of partners must be present. If this quorum is not met, the general assembly meeting is held after a 17-day period, irrespective of achieving a majority. We issue invitations for these general assembly meetings to all partners, and they confirm their attendance by signing. Since our cooperative's inception, we have never managed to obtain a majority at any of the general assembly meetings. For activities carried out within a year, such as income and expense statements, a work program is developed on the subject, and partners are informed. Partners are also apprised of the planned programs for the upcoming period, the projects to be undertaken, and the estimated budgets. This work program is submitted for the partners' approval, and once approved at the general assembly, the board of directors executes and finalizes these projects over the course of one year. Furthermore, our partners can readily voice objections or share information during these general assembly meetings. Through this information-sharing process, decisions pertaining to the agenda are made, and the board of directors is authorized to implement these decisions."

3.7.7 PUBLIC SUPPORT

As previously mentioned, İzmir exhibits significant advancements in terms of agricultural cooperatives and related organizations. In line with this organizational structure within the agricultural sector and rural areas, Agricultural Development Cooperatives (ADCs) in the region play a vital role in the Local Development Model. The municipality actively supports ADCs and producers' unions, aiming to sustain small-scale family farming. They procure products from cooperatives for their food aid campaigns, engage in contract farming, provide guarantees to cooperative producers, and offer support for cooperative infrastructure and technology capacity development. The Bademli Cooperative exemplifies this model, as the Municipality purchases a share of its dairy products. While the cooperative does not receive specific support from the state, it does leverage public incentives designed for cooperatives. In the past, it received grants and other forms of assistance from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry for construction, renovation, and renewable energy projects. Notably, only four cooperatives, including the Bademli Cooperative, received financial support for solar energy, with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry covering 30% of the costs of the solar energy plant.

3.7.8 SOCIAL CAPITAL BUILDING: CONCLUDING REMARKS

The region is notably conducive to the development of social capital. The absence of significant initial challenges for the cooperative's founders was beneficial. Nevertheless, concerns existed because the organizational and sharing capacity of individuals was quite limited before the cooperative's establishment. This deficiency was attributed to a lack of trust, which was paradoxically both a cause and a result of the absence of collective action among people. Trustworthy leadership and the swift results achieved by the cooperative movement played pivotal roles in encouraging individuals to become members. Shortly after its establishment, members witnessed and experienced the positive outcomes of collective thinking and action. The generation of income and its subsequent growth contributed to the economic advancement of Bademli. When rural residents observed these tangible achievements, their adoption and engagement processes accelerated, accompanied by increased social interactions. This progress was also facilitated by the continuous efforts of the cooperative, which expanded its focus from the horticultural sector to olive oil and dairy production. The cooperative not only transformed the sector but also enhanced its capacity and technology to align with the needs of the community. The cooperative has remained vigilant in keeping pace with technological advancements and the evolving needs of its members. Whenever a new decision concerning growth, innovation, or investments is contemplated, the cooperative consults with or informs its members, and together, they make the final decision.

The practice of cooperative partners collaborating throughout the production and marketing processes not only reduces input costs but also provides easier market access and the opportunity for higher value-added offerings. Consequently, cooperative products have gained widespread popularity within the region and the nation as a whole. In recent years, one of the cooperative's objectives has been to reduce rural-to-urban migration rates, aiming to address uneven population distribution and unemployment. In this case, economic development acted as the catalyst for enhancing existing social capital through the cooperative's tangible achievements and impacts. This, in turn, set in motion a chain reaction, fostering the development of social capital in the region. Nevertheless, it should be underscored that an appropriate environment is as pivotal as the cooperative's actions in building social capital.

The Bademli Cooperative has established strong lines of communication and cooperation with research institutions, universities, municipalities, and various other public and private organizations. Collaborations with scientists span various domains, including storage, tissue culture, milk and dairy product processing, nursery and production gardens, olive oil production, and solar energy production, thanks to its well-established R&D department. These innovations, developments, registered varieties, and overall success serve to strengthen the community's sense of belonging to both the cooperative and Bademli. Through the cooperative, individuals have learned that they can more easily overcome challenges when they work together. Even if an individual can produce a high-quality product independently, marketing it alone presents considerable challenges. Being part of the cooperative not only imparts competitive advantages but also instills a sense of pride in collective accomplishments.

3.8 TÜRKİYE (II) KÜMBET AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATIVE *(ENGİN GÖKHAN KULAN, FATMA HANDAN GIRAY, ÇIĞDEM AYDOĞAN AND YUSUF ERSOY YILDIRIM)*

3.8.1 INTRODUCTION

The Kümbet Agricultural Development Cooperative (Kümbet Coop) was established in 2004 in accordance with Cooperative Law No. 1163, enacted in 1994. As stipulated by the law, a minimum of seven individuals is required to found an agricultural development cooperative. Kümbet Coop attained this requisite number in 2006, thereby becoming a legally recognized entity. However, over time, its membership expanded to encompass 40 individuals, with 21 of them not previously engaged in any agricultural activities. Initially, the cooperative's founder organized regular coffee meetings, a practice with a significant impact on rural communities throughout the country. As a result of this sustained and extensive communication effort, the number of members grew to 60-70, and the cooperative officially commenced its activities in 2006.

3.8.2 TÜRKİYE REGION

The Kümbet Coop derives its name from the village where it is situated. In the Turkish language, "Kümbet" or "kubbe" translates to "dome." The village earned its name, Kümbet, as a reference to the Seljuk-era dome located at its center. Kümbet is situated in the Seyitgazi district of the Eskişehir province within the Central Anatolia Region of Turkey, situated at approximately 39° 12' North latitude and 30° 36' East longitude (Figure 3-48). It is positioned along the Eskişehir-Afyon main road, lying 42 km from Seyitgazi and 85 km from Eskişehir. The village is surrounded by other villages, including Karaören (5 km), Gökbahçe (6 km), Büyükyayla (8 km), and Çukurca (30 km).



Figure 3-48

a) Türkiye (country), b) Eskişehir (province), c) Seyitgazi (district), and d) Kümbet (village).

According to official statistics, Kümbet has 347 residents. However, during our last interview on February 2, 2022, the local authority, known as the "muhtar" in Turkish, stated that the village has approximately 600 inhabitants living in 150 households. The disparity in population figures stems from changes during the last muhtar election. With two candidates competing for the position, each candidate encouraged their supporters to register for village residency. These individuals acquired residency solely for voting purposes, implying that they are officially registered as residents but do not actually reside in Kümbet. Historically, during each election period, villagers used to elect a new candidate as "muhtar" since the early years of the Republic.

Kümbet is influenced by the climatic conditions of the Central Anatolia Region in which it is situated. It experiences a typical continental climate characterized by cold and rainy winters and hot and dry summers. Parts of the region are susceptible to flooding, particularly during spring, due to heavy rainfall. The predominant vegetation in the village consists of steppe areas with fruit-bearing and deciduous trees in the inner regions, while pine trees are prevalent in the northern parts of the village. The dominant soil types include brown forest soils, chestnut soils, and alluvial soils. The average annual temperature for the region is 10.8°C, with an average annual precipitation of 347.6 mm (Ercan, 2018).

The inhabitants of Kümbet are known as "manav," a term that originates from an ancient nomadic group called the "Türkmen." However, the "manavs" have never lived a nomadic lifestyle and were among the first Turkish people to settle in Anatolia. After migrating from Central Asia to Anatolia in the 11th century, they abandoned their nomadic ways and established settlements in various regions, including Sakarya, Bilecik, Balıkesir, Bursa, Çanakkale, Kocaeli, Eskişehir, Bolu, and Düzce (Doğru, 2017). Having resided in these areas since the Seljuk period, they are considered local residents. Most of the villagers in Kümbet

still identify themselves as "manav," with a smaller proportion being "Türkmen" and "muhacir" (emigrants from Balkan states in the past). These proportions are roughly reflected in the cooperative's membership, with approximately 80% being "manav," 15% "Türkmen," and 5% "muhacir." Apart from these groups, the village lacks ethnic diversity, resulting in a low potential for ethnic problems or conflicts. There is only one Afghan refugee in the village, who is engaged in small ruminant breeding.

The village's economy primarily relies on agriculture, encompassing both crop cultivation and animal husbandry, as well as trade (Toruk, 2014). However, non-agricultural income sources hold significance as supplementary earnings for subsistence farmers and, more broadly, for non-agricultural households in the village. Many farmers and most of the young individuals residing in Kümbet are employed at the Boron Mining facility in Kırka, a village located 13 km away from Kümbet. Most of the older and middle-aged men in the village have retired from their work in the mine. The population of children and teenagers in the village is in decline.

3.8.3 PRECONDITIONS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN THE REGION

The Kümbet Cooperative has been the first formal organization in the village. While a previous attempt to create a cooperative in the 1970s had failed, the inhabitants of Kümbet have always cooperated, albeit informally and without a structured organization. When something needed to be done in the common interest of the village or when an individual faced a problem, the villagers came together to act collectively. These collaborations primarily addressed basic or essential needs. The villagers reported that they have never experienced any serious conflicts or social exclusion in the village. However, social interactions among them increased after the establishment of the cooperative. This sense of solidarity and mutual trust among villagers created a peaceful and conducive environment, serving as a favorable precondition for building social capital. Additionally, working outside the village, especially at the Boral mining plant, contributed to the development of human capital. These factors created favorable conditions for the formation of a cooperative.

Nonetheless, effective leadership and communication skills were crucial because people had reservations about cooperative organizations due to negative perceptions stemming from past experiences. Negative perceptions of cooperatives in Turkey can be attributed to so-called construction cooperatives that had deceived people in the past. In Kümbet, there was a specific failure story related to a previous attempt to establish an Agricultural Development Cooperative (ADC). In the 1960s, ADCs were established as part of a state project aimed at encouraging rural people to establish development cooperatives with a focus on sending workforce abroad for employment (Sağlam, 2006). Individuals became members of ADCs but were given priority for overseas employment as employees rather than engaging in agricultural development activities. The first ADC in Kümbet was established under this framework but did not survive for long.

3.8.4 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

3.8.4.1 INTENTION

Despite the comprehensive scope of activities allowed for ADCs, the Kümbet Cooperative has had a very specific objective since its inception in 2006, which is to improve milk marketing. Traditionally, Kümbet is not known for livestock production, and there were only a few producers who had 1-3 cattle and sold raw milk directly from their farms. These were typically private farms owned by families, even though farm ownership was predominantly attributed to men. One of these producers, Mr. Seydi, repeatedly fell victim to unscrupulous traders and realized that he could not address his financial challenges and dairy processing needs on his own. He took the initiative to establish the cooperative. After legally establishing the cooperative with the minimum required 7 members, three of them secured personal loans to address their financial requirements. All of the founding members were men, with two having university degrees. They were willing to take personal risks to alleviate lingering concerns about the cooperative's viability. Initially, they purchased a vehicle for transportation. Their dedication, successful initiatives, transparent practices, and consistent communication efforts increased trust and rapidly convinced many people to join.

Currently, there are 197 members, of which only three are women, including some producers from other villages. The low female representation is not due to women's lack of involvement in agricultural activities, particularly in dairy production. This gender imbalance is primarily a result of the more traditional societal norms in regions like Kümbet, where it is often men who officially register and become members. Approximately half of the village's population falls within the 20-40 age group, with 70% of cooperative members being retirees actively engaged in agriculture, while the remainder work at the nearby Boron Mining facility and are involved in animal production.



Figure 3-49

Images from the interviews in the village

3.8.4.2 PROMOTING AND HINDERING FACTORS

Initially, the Kümbet Cooperative faced significant challenges related to trust and financial support. The primary reason behind these issues was the pressing financial needs of the community. Many individuals in the village had been deceived by unscrupulous actors before the cooperative's establishment. Consequently, some people viewed the cooperative as a means to raise funds, which would potentially be controlled by the cooperative's founders. To address these concerns, the three founders of the cooperative personally obtained consumer loans to cover their initial financial requirements. They did not request any financial support from the members. Over time, as they demonstrated their commitment and transparent practices, they managed to earn the trust of the villagers. Subsequently, they began utilizing public funding schemes to meet their financial needs.

In recent times, the cooperative has not faced significant challenges related to trust and finances. However, they are open to new partnerships and projects that can provide fresh perspectives and opportunities. They are eager to collaborate with other stakeholders, recognizing the potential for mutual benefits. This willingness to engage in cooperative endeavors was evident through the cooperative's participation in the social capital publication project. Kümbet Coop serves as a small, problem-focused, and successful

organization that can serve as an inspirational model for neighboring communities. Among the various cooperatives in the region, it stands out as the only one that has managed to maintain a clean financial record without any unpaid or overdue loans, and it has effectively managed its supply chain without major issues.

Promoting factors (+)	Hindering factors (-)
Personal consumer loans by 3 of the founding members	Initial lack of trust
No unpaid or overdue loans	Initial lack of financial support
No problems in the supply chains	Lack of interest for taking responsibility in the management more
Good reputation in the region	
Solidarity in the village	
Motivation for enhancing networking and cooperation.	

3.8.4.3 KÜMBET COOP’S MAIN ACTIVITIES ENHANCING SOCIAL CAPITAL

The primary economic activities of the Kümbet Cooperative are centered around milk production and marketing. At the farm level, animal husbandry is a family endeavor, with both men and women participating in milking, cleaning, and feeding. Given that villagers were not accustomed to market-oriented livestock production, the cooperative plays a crucial role in supporting them and providing agricultural extension services in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MoAF) extension unit. Moreover, the cooperative itself engages in basic research activities to enhance its production and marketing practices. Approximately 75% of the village's population are members of the cooperative, and over time, individuals from neighboring villages have also joined, accounting for half of the active members. Currently, 165 out of 197 cooperative members are involved in milk production, managing a total of 875 animals, with individual members owning anywhere from 1 to 50 cows. The cooperative is equipped with essential infrastructure, including three milk storage tanks, two cooling tanks (with capacities of 5 tons and 1 ton), a feed storage facility, and a cooperative building.

Services provided by the cooperative include:

(i) Feed Distribution: The cooperative maintains two professional staff members responsible for milk collection and feed distribution. Monthly feed requirements are determined based on member statements, and contracts with local feed factories secure the necessary feed, amounting to approximately 60-75 tons per month. This feed is then distributed to members according to their needs.

(ii) Data Collection: The dairy company that purchases all the milk produced by cooperative members requires specific data on milk quality, including temperature and pH

values. Additional information about the delivery process, such as time, vehicle, and driver details, is also collected and reported.

(iii) Veterinary Services: Regular veterinary visits are organized by the cooperative to monitor the health of the livestock. Recommendations for nutrition and treatments provided by veterinarians are implemented by the producers.

The cooperative primarily supplies wholesalers and does not have a direct link or network for short food supply chains with final consumers. The focus is on providing milk to wholesalers. To enhance milk productivity, the cooperative has introduced crossbreeding, specifically Holstein x Simmental, which has increased milk yields from around 20 liters per cow to up to 40 liters. Simmental breeds are favored by producers due to higher market demand, Artificial insemination can be expensive for Simmental breeds, so the village collectively maintains a bull for natural breeding. The bull is considered communal property and is used by all livestock producers in the village. Care and maintenance of the bull are organized on a rotating schedule among producers. Replacement bulls are selected every 2-3 years, with the process overseen by ten members of the cooperative and purchased by the village head ("muhtar") on behalf of the village. The cooperative actively seeks support schemes and new programs. For instance, they recently applied for 50% funding from the MoAF to acquire a sunflower sowing machine, even though sunflower production is not currently practiced in the village. However, due to high market prices, they aim to initiate sunflower cultivation.

In addition to its economic activities, the cooperative plays a significant role in social activities and fostering solidarity within the community:

(i) Cooperative Building: The cooperative has a building that was established with financial contributions from its members. This building features a large hall with a capacity of 150 people and is used for various social events, including weddings, dinners, and charity services.

(ii) Community Engagement: The cooperative actively engages with the local community. They regularly invite all villagers to participate in dinners during the fasting month of Ramadan. They also provide support and assistance to individuals and institutions in the village, including building a house for the village imam, offering annual financial aid to the village school and community, granting scholarships to 8-10 children of cooperative members for university education, and providing loans to their members.

(iii) Social Networking: Social networks are effectively utilized among cooperative members. There are four actively used social media accounts related to Kümbet village and a chat group with over 60 members, fostering communication and community engagement.

These social and economic activities collectively contribute to the development of social capital within the village of Kümbet.

Table 3-5: Social media accounts of the Kümbet village

Facebook account name	Active since	Number of followers
Kümbet Köyü Sosyal Yardımlaşma Dayanışma ve Kültür Derneği("Social Solidarity and Culture Association of Kümbet Village")	27.05.2016	1.113
Kümbet Köyü Haber ("News from Kümbet village")	31.08.2015	1.683
Kümbet, Eskişehir	26.01.2012	642
Kümbetliler("People from Kümbet")	28.10.2010	993



Figure 3-50
Images from various social events in the village

Thanks to the cooperative, livestock breeding in the village has seen significant improvements, and longstanding marketing challenges have been effectively resolved, leading to a reduction in feeding-related issues. Consequently, members of the cooperative have experienced a substantial increase in their incomes, with a notable 30% boost. Furthermore, the lowest per capita income in the village is now three times higher than the minimum wage in the country.

The cooperative's management team acknowledges that their primary bottleneck lies in animal feeding, and they assess their success in this aspect at approximately 60%. To address this challenge, they procure feed from a factory located in the Tinaztepe district of

Afyonkarahisar, incurring a fixed rate of 2.5% for this service. All the production is sold to a company situated in an organized industrial zone in Eskisehir. While they have collaborated with larger companies at the national level in the past, the cooperative has shifted its preference towards smaller-scale dairy processing companies. In 2022, they achieved a monthly milk production of approximately 4.5 tons, which was sold at a rate of 6.20 TL per liter. Notably, 95% of the revenue was directly disbursed to the producer, with the remaining 5% allocated for the cooperative. Through a straightforward cost/benefit analysis conducted by the cooperative, it has become evident that dairy farming has become a profitable venture, particularly for each individual producer. This holds true even more so when considering that 2022 posed significant challenges for the dairy sector in the country. It is now established that members of the cooperative earn more than the minimum wage stipulated by the country.

Table 3-6: Best practices in relation with social capital

Support tools for best practices and towards social capital building	The Kümbet Coop
How to convert informal social relations into a willingness to work together?	Regular meetings with villagers at the village coffee (“kahvehane”), good communication. Transparency on financial issues helped to convince people that the cooperative would not misemploy, and they would be stronger versus traders.
Communication	It is a key tool at the beginning and still play an important role.
Technology uses	Low (Milking machine).
Income generation activities	Yes.
Agricultural extension	Yes (feeding, hygiene, processing, fodder crop production).
Marketing (including service marketing for addressing rural tourism)	Yes (main purpose of the cooperative).

3.8.5 REGIONAL EMBEDDEDNESS

The Kümbet Coop's primary objective, task area, and focus remain centered on a single village, and there are no plans for physical or economic expansion. However, they aspire to diversify their products and activities at the village level, exploring possibilities like the production of fodder crops and sunflowers. They are actively seeking crops that can be grown more economically. Additionally, members are open to participating in relevant

activities and networks, aiming to integrate into existing networks and collaborate with other stakeholders in the region.

3.8.6 GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Kümbet Coop adheres to the same cooperative and prototype management structure as all agricultural development cooperatives in Turkey. This structure includes a management team consisting of six individuals, comprising three members of the steering committee and three members of the supervisory board. The cooperative is one of the 51 members of the Eskisehir Livestock Cooperatives Regional Union at the provincial level, and it is indirectly affiliated with the Livestock Cooperatives Central Union (HAYKOOP), which operates at the national level. In addition to this formal governance structure, the cooperative actively engages all members and villagers in cooperative governance through informal meetings, such as coffee gatherings and various social events. This participatory approach distinguishes Kümbet Coop from similar cooperatives. It goes beyond mandatory meetings, fostering a sense of collaboration and community engagement. Notably, the village administration plays a significant role in facilitating collaborative management due to its close relationship with the cooperative.

3.8.7 PUBLIC SUPPORT

Public support for agricultural cooperatives in Turkey is provided by the state. The Kümbet Coop applied for assistance under the Rural Area Social Support Project (KASDEP), a joint initiative by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MoAF) and the Ministry of Family and Social Services. KASDEP has been active since 2003 and focuses on supporting cooperatives belonging to low-income groups, particularly in livestock or greenhouse projects. Kümbet Coop benefited from a livestock funding scheme known as "2 X 50," which granted two cattle to each household in selected villages consisting of 50 households each. This initiative resulted in the allocation of 100 cattle and additional funds for operational purposes to cooperative members in 2009. The cooperative president acknowledged the crucial role played by the district government in leading and supporting this project. Notably, five women also applied for and received grant support. Various public support schemes are available nationwide for cooperatives. In the case of Kümbet Coop, the process operates as follows: The dairy factory (Yeşilçay) purchases milk from cooperative members at the prevailing market price, which was 5.20 Turkish Lira per liter during the interviews. Additionally, due to the cooperative's membership in HAYKOOP (Central Animal Production Union), members receive an additional payment of 1.00 Turkish Lira per liter of milk sold. In total, a cooperative member receives 6.20 Turkish Lira for every liter of milk. Furthermore, Yeşilçay provides the cooperative with approximately 0.35-0.40 Turkish Lira per liter, varying depending on the milk's quality.

3.8.8 SOCIAL CAPITAL BUILDING: CONCLUDING REMARKS

When the founding members of Kümbet Coop embarked on their journey to establish a cooperative, their primary motivation was to collaboratively address financial and marketing challenges. At the time, the concept of "togetherness" and an understanding of social capital building were not well-defined, and these elements were not their primary focus. Their specific goal was to find solutions to their financial problems, particularly by marketing their milk and protecting themselves from exploitation by traders. Initially, they considered organizing as an agricultural credit cooperative due to its perceived simplicity.

The early phase of Kümbet village's cooperative initiative aligns with the scenario described by Putnam (2006) as.

"the well-connected individual in a poorly connected society."

The cooperative capitalized on the well-connected individuals within the village and gradually evolved into "a well-connected society" as they cultivated trust and engaged in successful collaborative activities. This transformation, from individual connections to a cohesive and interconnected community, highlights the cooperative's remarkable journey in building social capital and nurturing stronger bonds among its members.

4 CONCLUSIONS – TOWARD A NEW DEFINITION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL (MARIA RIVERA AND DOMINIK NOLL)

The past 200 years have been transformational for rural regions on a global scale. Industrialization fundamentally changed the energy basis of societies and thus the way humans interact with the environment. Societies' increasing demand of resources puts pressure on rural regions and brings them to a difficult position that stands between economic development and preservation needs. Globalization of markets connects remote regions directly with the global economy. This increases the availability of products in these regions, but also results in a downward pressure on prices for domestic products and thus threatens regional and local economies.

Nowadays, more than 50% of the global population lives in cities. In European countries only a minor fraction of the economically active population currently works in the primary sector. This results in an increasing distance between consumption patterns and their environmental and sociocultural impact, as most consumers are not aware about the direct consequences of their actions. Most European rural regions are challenged with a declining population due to low birthrates and emigration of especially young people to urban centers. At the same time, they need to provide resources and services for an increasingly urban population. However, rural regions are much more than just food production areas, rural areas need to thrive because they also are the protectors of our cultural values, the rural world is a great protector of traditions, folklore, and identity. Rural populations work in the conservation and maintenance of traditional buildings and ethnological museums, organize heritage fairs etc.; they also guarantee the conservation and sustainability of soils,

forests and biodiversity, abandonment brings grave forest fires and loss of vegetation; and rural areas are spaces of rest and detox for the urban world, bring both physical and emotional health.

However, rural regions suffer the negative consequences of climate change and economic and population decline. This last consequence is the one that may cause highest damage in the short term to rural regions. Rural regions where there are no people have no way to develop. They will be forgotten and abandoned. Without people and people's relationships with each other, there is no way innovative solutions can be developed to solve the different challenges. Therefore, it is paramount that the social capital, understood as the ability of a society to foster positive change for the common good, that already exists in rural areas, is not only nurtured but also strengthened if we want rural regions to prosper and thrive.

The best practice examples (BPE) illustrated in this book have allowed us to draw novel conclusions regarding the importance of social capital for sustainable rural development. They are set in 4 different countries and are exposed to different socioeconomic and environmental contexts. The creation of such initiatives is not straight forward, their success far from guaranteed and each of them is confronted with their own set of challenges, but all these cases have been able to flourish thanks to social capital.

Social capital is a key development resource

Social capital thrives more easily under sound economic socio-cultural and environmental conditions. As Putnam (2000) stated, a “well-connected individual in a poorly connected society is not as productive as a well-connected individual in a well-connected society. And even a poorly connected individual may derive some of the spillover benefits from living in a well-connected community”. This indicates thoroughly the limits and restrictions of social capital as a tool for rural development. Where preconditions are poor, mischief is likely to occur and social capital could hardly compensate or at least extraordinary efforts are needed. Simultaneously, social capital is a precious asset. A “connected society” that is rich of social capital may promote rural development more easily. This is something that was observed in the BPE of InnSalzach-EUREGIO (3.1), where local social capital played a decisive role. It facilitated the utilization of local resources, both in terms of natural and human resources, using them for the common good of the region i.e., producing their own energy supply with the leadership of the municipality. In the case of Kumbet BPE (3.8), the cooperative took advantage of the “well-connected individual” and developed into “a well-connected society” through building trust and organizing successful activities.

Institutions and policies need to allow social capital to thrive

Social capital can only be effectively exploited and created with the support of institutions and policies. Policies must encourage cooperation and provide opportunities for learning and promoting trust between the local actors: i.e., BPE LEADER Region in Vorarlberg (3.2). Policy makers should be aware that their action can have catastrophic effects on social capital, for example, the closing down of public services can highly disrupt community ties. As Wiesinger (2007) notes, social capital should be installed in the hardware of infrastructures and services as a prerequisite for successful rural development.

The Huete BPE (3.4) is another good example of the strength local institutions may have to nurture and promote social capital. Huete municipality and the foundation, through different LEADER projects, have managed to increase trust and participation in the community, who are everyday increasingly engaged with the new initiatives. This has also instigated the revitalization of the local economic activity, generating not only economic dynamism but also social dynamism within the entire community. As was concluded in the BPE, at the end, it is but always an interplay of so-called champions, people who take the incentive to lead a process, their ideas and how these can contribute to the community, the engagement of people from the larger community and the socioeconomic context in supporting these incentives.

Social capital can be built

The BPE where cooperatives were created, have shown how through these structures social capital can be built. For example, the Fraimon BPE (3.3) was an instrument for creating better social cohesion despite the unfavourable contextual conditions under which it was created, such as the lack of trust between producers and the bad experiences this region had with previous associations. However, this formal association created a safe space for producers to share their fears and concerns, co-developing a common objective.

The case of the BPE Minga Cooperative (3.6) contributed substantially to the building of social capital assembling people with a wide range of skills and professional backgrounds. They also conduct frequent trainings and workshops for its members and other people. In this sense Minga is and will stay a central player in the context of social capital within the region of Montemor-o-Novo and beyond, even if one of the most important challenges remaining today is to win confidence and trust of the local agricultural community.

Social capital can shape hearts and minds

When people start to act and think together, mental barriers can be overcome to give rise to new opportunities and increased social capital. For example, in the Bademli Case Study (3.7), right after the cooperative had started to work, members already observed and experienced the positive effects of thinking and acting together, i.e. increased income. This was then followed by more participation and more social interaction leading to the success of the cooperative, which also brought economic growth to the local community. In the case of PSVA (3.5), being part of the program totally changed how members saw their role in achieving environmental sustainability to the sector. The program raised awareness on environmental degradation, especially regarding climate change, the importance of a local identity and market access regarding globalization, sustainable water management, paradigm change towards more sustainable agricultural practices, improvement of decision making and planning processes, and improvement of the supply chain.

Importance of social capital for rural prosperity

Our selected BPE are only a few amongst the many successful initiatives in the rural context that thrive thanks to social capital building. Social capital is at the very core of prosperity as defined in van del Ploeg et al. (2008), by enhancing the potential of such initiatives in rural regions to create and/or foster ecological sustainability, social inclusion and quality of life

at large. The selected BPE are diverse, as each of them has a different focus with a diverse network of actors and is embedded into different regional contexts and landscapes. Still, these examples all integrate the three dimensions of sustainability and thus follow an integrative approach for enhancing sustainable development in rural regions. This shows that for the complex problems societies face today, the main attributes of social capital, namely networks, cooperation and trust, help creating incentives that not only focus on economic opportunities but also successfully integrate social and environmental factors.

As we have already argued, the challenged rural areas must face are so great, that without good institutional support and economic resources, small scale initiatives may not be enough to reverse the decline of rural areas. It is important that policy makers at national and international levels are aware of the importance of protecting and preserving social capital if they want to build successful development programs that help rural regions to thrive. For this to happen, it is also important that social capital has a common uncontested and agreed definition to help develop effective methods to measure and evaluate social capital in rural areas. From our learnings and conclusions, we can add to this task by providing traits of what social capital means when contextualized in the prosperity of rural regions.

Social capital is the ability of rural communities to work together fostering social, economic and environmental sustainability from the community to the landscape level and beyond.

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