



Working Paper

About Statistics on Cooperatives in Argentina

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CIRIEC No. 2021/08

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Abstract

The aim of the article is to analyze the information on cooperatives generated and published by official sources since the origins of Argentine cooperativism to examine its characteristics, usefulness and limitations. The idea is to provide an overview of current cooperativism based on statistical sources available at the National Institute of Associativism and Social Economy - the body that regulates the activity of cooperatives. The article systematizes the data from a register based on information provided to the agency by registered cooperatives. Referring to the official statistical source, the sector for the year 2021 is classified according to the main economic activity of the cooperatives, and other indicators that allow us to identify the distribution and weight of the various branches of Argentine cooperativism, both in terms of the number of associates and in terms of the jobs created.

Keywords: Statistics, Cooperative Enterprises, Employment, Worker-members

JEL Codes: J18, L2, P13, C15, D02

Introduction

Statistical sources on cooperative organizations in Argentina have been limited and insufficient to accurately portray the composition of the sector and trends in its evolution. Scarce and poorly structured statistical records produced by the public sector and by representative entities, as well as discontinuous and in some cases not very comparable information from different sources pose obstacles when dealing with data categories of similar classification and coverage.

The national census sources, by providing structural and extensive data of all the units that comprise a sector of activity, should provide insights of the main characteristics and transformations of cooperativism, but the censuses cannot be considered a customary statistical source because their frequency is inadequate to provide updated data.

They provide reliable data for the year the census is carried out and can serve as a reference for the improvement of other statistics on the sector.

Apart from the academic interest on the subject, the government —at all levels—, civil society and in particular cooperatives, need to have systematized, reliable, and comparable information on cooperatives. This information, available for different purposes, would be particularly useful for decision-making, for designing public policies and for the implementation of regional and local development strategies. Paradoxically, in spite of the great weight the enterprises in the sector have on the national economy, what is known about them is insufficient. For these reasons, the purpose of this work consists of 1) analyzing the information on cooperatives generated and published by official sources since the origins of Argentine cooperativism, examining its characteristics, usefulness and limitations and 2) providing an overview of current cooperativism based on statistical sources available at the National Institute of Associativism and Social Economy - the body that regulates the activity of cooperatives.

The study systematizes the data from a register based on information provided to the agency by registered cooperatives. Considering the information provided by this official statistical source, the sector for the year 2021 is classified according to the main economic activity of the cooperatives, and other indicators that allow us to identify the distribution and weight of the various branches of Argentine cooperativism, both in terms of the number of associates and in terms of the jobs created.

On the statistical classification of information on cooperatives

The effectiveness of the classification systems of cooperatives in the statistics of different countries and the coherence of the records, within data sets and between data sets, was first posed by Georges Fauquet¹ in the 1930's. In reviewing the systems employed, the author distinguished between those intended for theoretical purposes — which conceived the types of entities mainly as instruments for analyzing the structure and methods of action of cooperative institutions — from those which described the historical development of the cooperative movement in different countries. To these he added a third type destined to support preconceived theories that introduced evaluations of cooperative institutions in general, or their different varieties, according to these theories.

The limitations of each system and the need to derive a few simple notions from the classification led Fauquet to argue that a coherent system would not require the invention of a completely new method of classification.

It would be sufficient to make a few changes and clarify a few points, thus rendering the available statistics somewhat more comparable than they already are; for existing classifications already contain many common headings, which it would suffice to define more exactly. On the basis of the common features and resemblances already to be found in the statistics of official or co-operative origin (Fauquet, 1939 p. 456).

These considerations were taken as a reference in the report of the Special Committee approved by the International Cooperative Alliance in 1937 and although the organizations adhered to ICA attempted to a greater or lesser degree to achieve the objective of reliability of the information produced by the different institutions, no general guidelines or proposals were formulated for adoption in this area.

It should be noted that in its website ICA publishes a section dedicated to world cooperative statistics, stressing its importance for various reasons. The main one is that they allow the analyses of progress and trends in the growth and development of cooperatives and play a key role in research, education, technical assistance, and public planning and policies. It considers the contribution of statistics so that the movement may be compared with

¹ Fauquet was the first chief of the Cooperation Section of the International Labor Organization (ILO). He took over the leadership in 1920 and worked closely with the former director of that section, Albert Thomas. He held the position until 1932 and after retiring from that institution, he continued working in the cooperative sphere (ILO, 2020).

companies or other forms of organization and the reality and history of cooperatives may be contrasted with evidence.

Recognizing the challenge of analyzing and collecting statistics in the cooperative movement, ICA considers that:

- Relationships between various cooperative enterprises lead to possible double registration.
- There is no statistical data available to be published and those that do exist are found at different levels of cooperative structures. The statistics refer to different levels, although often only one of them has a part of the history of each one: national level, federations, leaderships, unions, primary cooperatives, etc.
- Some organizations provide their own data, or only for their members, or a combination of both.
- The data provided cannot always be recorded.

For these reasons and given the importance of building a complete profile on the reality of each country, it is necessary to collect data at different levels, to recognize the relationships between the organizations that provide the data, and then analyze the results, so as to reduce the possibility of biases due to double registration.

Moreover, when focusing on the issue of statistics in the field of labor, employment and the underutilization of the labor force, since 2008 the ILO has assigned particular importance to statistics and has perceived the need to review and update the standards in use to give them a greater scope². For the institution, it was a question of adopting more flexible statistics—including all forms of work— and having more comprehensive measurement of the underutilization of the labor force in order to improve the monitoring of labor markets.

At the XIX International Conference of Labor Statisticians (ICLS) held in October 2013, representatives of governments, workers and employers reaffirmed the importance of obtaining more complete and internationally comparable statistics on cooperatives and approved a resolution on future work in the field

² The revision responded to appeals made in 2008 by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) and in the framework of the 18th International Conference of Labor Statisticians (ICLS).

of statistics on cooperatives. In 2018, as a result of previous work, the ILO formulated the guidelines regarding statistics on cooperatives (ILO, 2018)³.

Statistics on cooperatives in Argentina

The various authors who stated the importance of statistical information on Argentine cooperatives (Bórea, 1917; Garibaldi, 1964; Kaplan and Drimer, 2017, Yuri Izquierdo, 1972) underline its importance to reflect the significant singularities of cooperativism, describe changes and provide exhaustive, rigorous, homogeneous and exclusive information on its organizations.

Back in 1911, Minister Eleodoro Lobos ordered the Dirección de Economía Rural y Estadística (DERE) to create a special register of cooperatives to systematize the information to build a statistical register to provide information on the changes produced in the cooperative system. In April 1912, “the 'mutuality and cooperation' section was established as one of the DERE offices, which, without increasing budgetary expenses, conscientiously fulfilled its mission” (Bórea, 1917 p. 158). Gradually, the register enabled the publication of the “Estadística general de sociedades cooperativas” that included, for each sector, aggregate information on cooperatives and members, subscribed capital, realized capital, profit, losses and business operations. Between 1912 and 1948, the data were collected by the "Registration, Inspection and Promotion of Cooperatives" Office, which functioned within the scope of the Ministry of Agriculture ⁴

³ The ILO acknowledges the need to produce statistics on cooperatives in all countries of the world and cites the Resolution on future work on statistics on cooperatives, adopted by the 19th International Conference of Labor Statisticians (2013), the requirements of the Recommendations for the Promotion of Cooperatives, 2002 (No. 193), and, in particular, the need for national policies that improve national statistics on cooperatives, for their use in the formulation and implementation of development policies, together with the current international statistical standards which have resulted from resolutions by the International Conference of Labor Statisticians, in particular the Resolution on labor statistics, occupation and labor underutilization, passed by the 19th International Conference (2013), and the resolution concerning statistics on work relationships, passed by the 20th International Conference of Labor Statisticians (2018). Recognizing the need for consistency with other existing international statistical standards, in particular concerning the National Accounts System (NAS), it establishes and endorses a set of guidelines, and encourages countries to submit the conceptual framework on which they are based to a validation process (ILO, Report III. ICLS / 20/2018/3).

⁴ In 1953 the register was the responsibility of the Dirección Nacional de Cooperativas (General Directorate of the Undersecretariat of Commerce and Commercial Control of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce). The Directorate was later named National Cooperative Service and since 1967 it has been a dependency of the General Directorate for

until 1944. The Office produced a "Síntesis Estadística de las Sociedades Cooperativas", that was distributed in printed form from the mid-1960s to 1983 and maintained the same characteristics regarding the indicators surveyed. The data, from the registered cooperatives, reflected the information provided by the cooperatives on the state of their financial situation.

As from 1983, public statistical information ceased to be disseminated, until 2000, when the INACyM resolved to promote the distribution of the statistical information that the agency obtained by processing the data it collected, in compliance with its mandate. (Res. INACyM No. 9/2000). In this regard, the organization's management considered that one of its objectives was to provide free and unrestricted access to the aforementioned information.

Since 2000, the computerized information system has provided limited information on the cooperatives: location data, identification of the activity and in some cases contact information. It has progressively incorporated information on the status of cooperatives to differentiate active from canceled and suspended, although it has not provided aggregate statistics regarding the entities' share capital, the number of associates or employment. This circumstance, which has kept access to the information unchanged for two decades, indicates that the data does not meet certain recognized criteria such as precision, timeliness, accuracy and understandability.

The classification of cooperative activities in the Argentine statistical system

The National Institute of Statistics and Censuses records economic activities in Argentina according to the National Classifier of Economic Activities

Community Promotion (State Secretariat for Community Promotion and Assistance of the Ministry of Social Welfare). Once Law 20,337 went into effect, the directorate became the National Institute of Cooperative Action and since that year there have been important changes in the composition of the organism. In 1983, with the creation of the Cooperative Action Secretariat (Ministry of Economy), in 1996 with the merger of the Instituto Nacional de Acción Cooperativa (INAC) and the Instituto Nacional de Mutuales, creating the Instituto Nacional de Acción Cooperativa y Mutual (INACyM), and its transfer to the Secretariat of Social Development of the Presidency of the Nation. In October 2000, with the creation of the Instituto Nacional de Asociativismo y Economía Social (INAES) with a structure that gave greater emphasis to the joint action of the provincial bodies that make up the Federal Cooperative and Mutual Council and in 2020 with the transfer of the INAES from the Secretariat of Social Economy of the Ministry of Social Development to the orbit of the Ministry of Productive Development.

(CLANAE 2010)⁵. The national statistical system adopts this classifier to facilitate the interrelation of official statistics⁶. In this system, data on cooperatives come from different sources, with diverse interests in terms of the information collected, partial coverage and periodicity not always compatible with analytical purposes.

Data on cooperative enterprises in the different economic branches are collected throughout the country by national censuses. The National Economic Census characterizes the statistical economic activity of cooperatives as companies — based on their status as non-profit institutions — to record the activities they carry out and the jobs they create. The National Agricultural Census collects data on the characteristics of the farms and the producer, land uses, cultivation practices, animal production, infrastructure and machinery, residents and workers. In this case, cooperatives are considered both by the land tenure regime, as well as by the status of the producer and his relationship with the cooperatives. The importance of census records should be highlighted, although their main limitation lies in their periodicity (regular intervals of 10 years or more).

Specifically, statistical information is produced in different government offices such as the Federal Administration of Public Revenue (AFIP), the National Administration of Social Security through the Argentine Integrated Pension System (SIPA) and the different ministries related to the activities of the cooperative enterprises. This diversity of sources makes it difficult to verify the consistency of the information. Moreover, the data are protected by statistical secrecy⁷. It should also be noted that cooperatives have dealings with different State agencies and are taxed as non-profit entities, although it is not known whether they share some information with the regulatory body. Added to this is the lack of continuity in the upkeep of databases and the difficulty of accessing public information, as factors that prevent information from being compared over time.

The foregoing limitations were considered when using the registry from INAES as a source of information to classify the data collected and refer to the four main types proposed by the ILO, based on the primary interest of its members:

⁵ The National Classifier of Economic Activities 2010 (CLANAE 2010) is based on the United Nations' ISIC revision 4, approved by disposition No. 825/2010. It contains the codes of the different branches of economic activity applicable within the framework of Law N° 17622.

⁶ It is an instrument used by the Provincial Statistical Offices; organizations such as AFIP, ANSES, the Ministry of Productive Development and private sector users.

⁷ Law N° 17,622 that in 1968 mandated the modernization and streamlining of the statistical service, establishes in article 10 that "the information supplied to the organizations that are part of the National Statistical System, in compliance with this law, will be strictly secret and only will be used for statistical purposes".

i) producer cooperatives; ii) worker cooperatives; iii) consumer/user cooperatives, and iv) multi-stakeholder cooperatives.

An overview of Argentine cooperativism

In this section, the information available in the INAES register in 2021 will be systematized based on the membership criteria (Table 1).

Table 1. Active registered cooperatives: number of entities, associates and work posts

Type of cooperative (a) Member	Interest (b)	Type of members (c)	Classification according to INAES (d)	Cooperatives (e)	Associates (f)	Work posts (g)
Producers	Activity productive	Producers	Agricultural	718	219 030	18 726
			Provision	620	368 464	6901
Workers	Work	Workers	Work and workers	8140	181 398	186 460
User / consumer	Consumption	Consumers	Consumption	129	1,951,992	4088
			Housing and construction	738	1,251,079	4,418
			Utilities	1178	4,076,800	25,048
			Credit	142	2,128,805	6,000
			Insurance	18	8,327,991	5,797
TOTAL				11,683	18,505,559	257,438

Source: Own elaboration based on the registration of entities INAES 2021

According to the data, there are three types of cooperatives in the country: those of producers, those of workers and those of consumers/users. The type of multi-stakeholder cooperatives or mode in which members of diverse nature (workers, consumers and/or producers) share representation in corporate bodies, with no dominant position of a group of stakeholders, is not one of the practices of local cooperativism.

However, INAES resolution 478/2020 admits the possibility of establishing multi-stakeholder cooperative entities defining them as integrated "with associates who fulfill different roles in the production and consumption chain, linked to each other by geographical proximity" in which up to a third of its associates

are persons with another legal status. This resolution explicitly refers to higher-level entities.

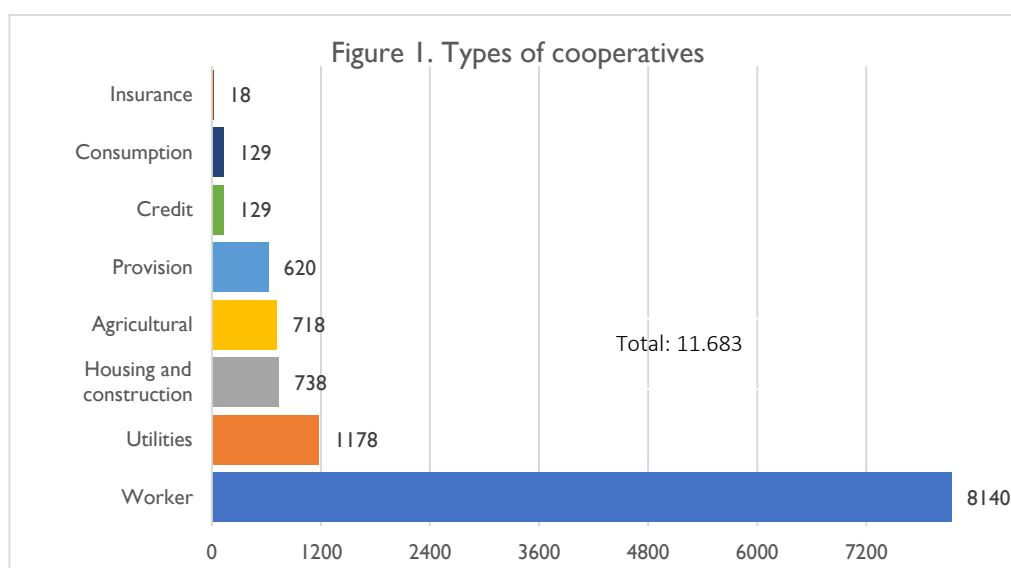
Based on this classification in Table 1, in columns a, b, and c are three groups of entities according to these dimensions (ILO, 2018 p. 4; Bouchard, 2020 p. 14), without considering “multiple stakeholders”, since they are not defined and informed in first grade cooperatives. Column d exhibits the groupings discriminated by type.

The data correspond to the entities classified by the INAES as “active”⁸, excluding those that in the register were in the category cessation of activities (suspended, canceled or with withdrawal of authorization to operate), as well as entities that did not report the number of associates.

Neither were the higher-grade cooperatives (federations and confederations) considered. Columns e, f and g indicate, respectively, the number of active entities, associated-users and jobs created in each grouping. The sectorial profile of Argentine cooperatives presented by the indicators in Table 1 is illustrated in figures 1, 2 and 3. In the records, worker cooperatives stand out in the first place (Figure 1), with a marked majority, with around 70% of registrations.

Next, at a considerable distance, are consumer cooperatives and producer cooperatives. In the first group —consumers— it is worth noting the importance of utilities cooperatives, most of them “multi-service” providers of electricity, drinking water, sewers, cable TV, internet, and other social services. It should be noted that electricity cooperatives, since their origins in the second decade of the 20th century, and later, were created on similar bases, with the purpose of defending their associates against the abusive conditions imposed in the interior of the country by the private electricity companies.

⁸ In September 2018, INAES requested an update of data from cooperatives with the intention of providing each entity with a unique electronic file. After the rule expired, in September 2019 the entities that had not complied with the national data update “had their authorization to operate suspended.” By October 7, 2019, the INAES had suspended 20,600 entities.

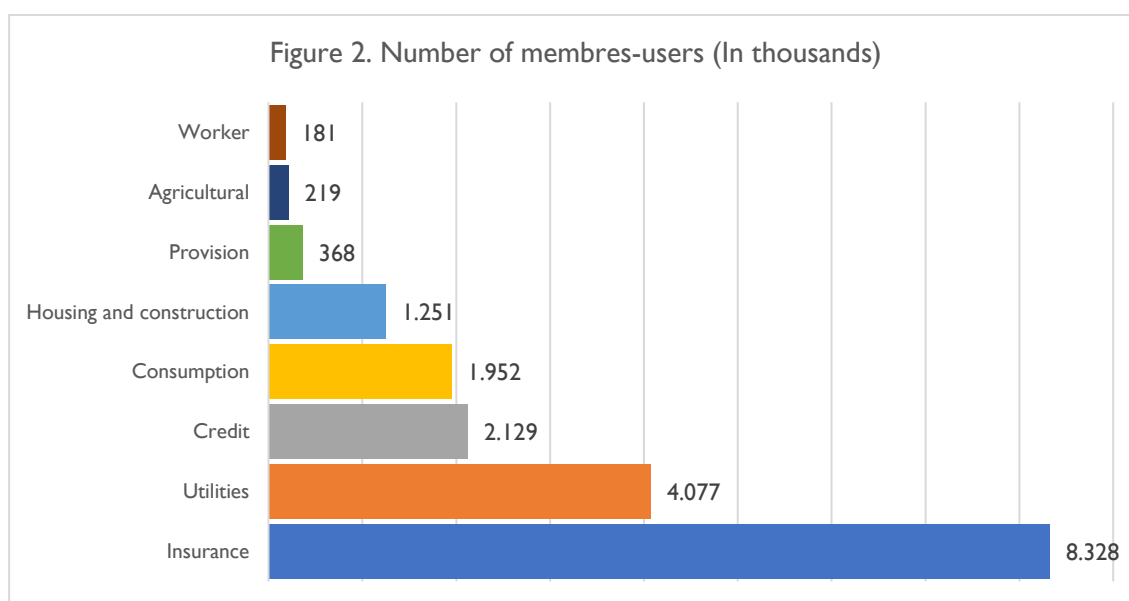


Source: Own elaboration based on the INAES 2021

These private companies had replaced various existing national companies and were linked to groups of foreign origin (Kaplan and Drimer, 2017). The provision of electricity service is the main objective of these cooperatives, which operate 80% of the rural electrification networks in the country. They also provide essential services such as gas, drinking water, sewers, telecommunications, etc. The second group —producer cooperatives— comprises agricultural cooperatives and the provision cooperatives in similar parts. The latter type includes cooperatives that offer services to their associates to develop their productive activity⁹, particularly for producers and entrepreneurs of various sectors (agriculture, transportation, pharmaceutical, retail trade at fairs, etc.).

The data provided by the registration, in the case of worker cooperatives, do not permit the identification of the sector of economic activity to which they belong, unlike those oriented to the secondary sector (production cooperatives) and services.

⁹ Almost all provision cooperatives that are active are of producers. Among them, the provision of services to pharmacies are prominent. Some have been established since the mid-1950s and are owners of medicinal drug laboratories to supply associated pharmacies across the country. There are also initiatives that bring together cooperatives in a region to offer promotion and dissemination services that stimulate the training of young people, and others that provide supplies for agricultural producers, traders and technicians in the agricultural sector.



Source: Own elaboration based on the INAES 2021

Secondly, and from the perspective of the number of member-users (Figure 2), the previous characterization is significantly modified given that consumer cooperativism prevails in the group. It is important to note the diversity of situations of cooperative membership associated with multiple entities: an agricultural producer can be associated at the same time with an agricultural cooperative, a utilities cooperative, a provision cooperative, an insurance cooperative, a credit cooperative and a consumer cooperative.

Additionally, the data available on associates—in the case of some sectors—when reported from the headquarters of the cooperative, do not consider the user's address, and are concentrated in that sector in a single province. For example, consider the case of the province of Santa Fe: it has almost 5 million members in insurance cooperatives, but its estimated population is around 3.4 million inhabitants. Although the frequent duplication of records limits the perspective of classifying associates by numbers, it provides an idea—at least—of where the greatest “density of cooperative activities” is located.

The dominant position held by insurance cooperatives, utilities cooperatives and - to a lesser degree - entities dedicated to credit and consumption is remarkable. In the insurance branch, it is worth highlighting the weight of eighteen entities that offer coverage of insurable risks of different nature, with more than 8 million associates. Operating in an insurance market which includes 192 entities¹⁰, two of them top the ranking of leading insurers in attributes

¹⁰ In 2020, most of the companies operate in the field of property and mixed insurance (122) while 12 operate exclusively in occupational hazard insurance. (SSN, 2020).

such as sustainable vision and compliance with their commitment to policy holders and have a prominent position in specific segments (Estrategas, 2020).

Table 2. Employment in active cooperatives

Sector	Active Entities	Employment	Employment / entities
Workers	8140	186,460	23
Utilities	1178	25,048	21
Agricultural	718	18,726	26
Provision	620	6,901	11
Credit	142	6,000	42
Insurance	18	5,797	322
Housing and construction	738	4,418	6
Consumption	129	4,088	32

Source: own elaboration based on the INAES 2021

In terms of retail and mass consumption, it is worth mentioning one of the centuries-old consumer entities, established in the province of Buenos Aires, with branches in four provinces, with 91% of associates in the sector and 3.9% of the local market. In the characterization of the profile of Argentine cooperatives according to job positions (Table 2), the weight of worker cooperatives is once again evident.

The number of worker-associates in this type of entity is equivalent to almost three out of every four cooperative jobs. It is worth noting that, when computing these jobs, in many cases only organizations and formal jobs with regular income are considered, without admitting the possibility of a worker organization with no a formal work relationship (Cracogna, 2016, p. 62). In this area, it is important to underline the legal nature of the link that binds workers with the worker cooperatives in which they labour (Gleizer, 1997), as an associative link that establishes the undertaking of activities that are essentially of a cooperative nature, as provided for in Article 4 of Law 20,337, since this fundamental issue has decisive effects on almost all the other aspects related to self-employment (Vuotto, 2011). The number of 5,062 jobs implicit

in the total jobs in Table 1¹¹ corresponds to personnel hired in technical or specialized services for specific tasks, with a duration that does not exceed six months¹².

The categorization of the jobs of associates in worker cooperatives, according to the current international standard (ICSE-18 ILO), is considered to correspond to that of persons employed (dependent on the job) for reasons that justified the decision to consider them for the position (Eum, 2019). But in Latin American countries, employment conditions corresponding to worker-associates are not specifically defined. In terms of statistical registration and also in administrative terms, this condition is assimilated to that of a self-employed worker. For this reason, if associate workers are placed in the category of self-employed - without precisions - the risk in many countries is that they will be excluded from the social security system for workers in a branch or sector, to the detriment of the self-employed. Likewise, in other countries, by not specifying their status, the condition of the associated worker is distorted, by assimilating him to the self-employed worker, with no access to the future benefits of a contributory pension system. In this sense, in Argentina the cost that self-employment entails is substantial, in terms of diminished retirement income and in comparison with pensions of the formal workers in a branch or sector.

To change this classification, the diversity of national situations of associated workers would require considering empirical cases grouped in compatible situations, according to the specific characteristics of these workers and in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Altogether, the 257,438 jobs in cooperatives represent barely 1.5% of employment in the country, a figure that is more significant in some sectors and in geographic contexts where the cooperative presence is a driving force in the local economy (e.g. employment in utilities). When disaggregating the occupation of each sector according to data from the Ministerio de Trabajo, Empleo y Seguridad (2021), cooperative employment in the agricultural sector represents 5.7% of the total 330 thousand jobs in the sector.

On the other hand, employment in utility cooperatives is significant since it is equivalent to 33.7% of the occupation in electricity, gas and water services. Likewise, the financial sector (which groups together banks and insurance companies without discriminating) registers 155 thousand jobs and in this case

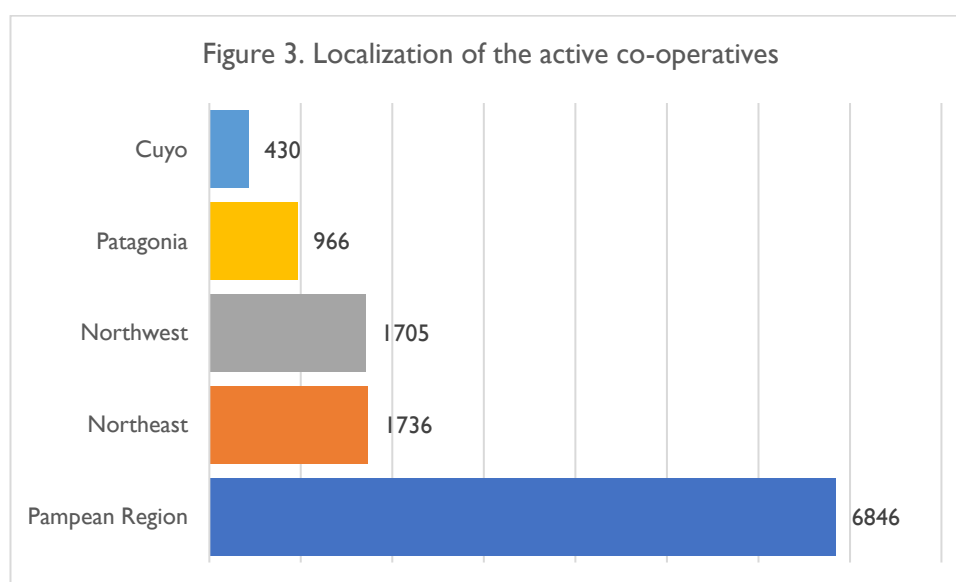
¹¹ In Table 1 column (g), the total number of associates and the number of employees (181 398 + 5 062 = 186 460) are counted as job positions.

¹² In resolution 360/75, INAC established exceptions to the concept of mutuality for worker cooperatives, which allows them - under strict circumstances - to have non-associated workers as employees. These include: seasonal work overload, trial periods, etc.

credit cooperatives and insurance companies account for 8.3% of jobs in the sector.

As for consumption, an official statistical source (INDEC, 2021) mentions that the occupation in supermarkets and wholesale supermarkets totaled 106,500 employees. This means that employment in consumer cooperatives represents 4.5% of the workforce in the sector.

Finally, Figure 3 exhibits the localization of the active co-operatives, and indicates that territorial conditions have been a relevant factor in terms of their activities, given the influence that these conditions have exercised on the characteristics of their modalities, the links with the membership and the evolution over time. In this configuration it is evident that the highest concentration of entities and population is in the Pampean region¹³.



Source: Own elaboration based on the INAES 2021 register of entities

In fact, Argentine production is mainly concentrated in that region where, specifically, the province of Buenos Aires and the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires generate more than half of the country's GDP. In line with this reference, there is the highest concentration of cooperatives in the agricultural and industrial sectors. The localization also coincides with that

¹³ The following INDEC nomenclature (2019 p. 34) was used for the country's regional divisions: Pampean Region (provinces of Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Entre Ríos, La Pampa, Santa Fe and Autonomous City of Buenos Aires), Northeast (Chaco, Corrientes, Formosa and Misiones), Northwest (Catamarca, Jujuy, La Rioja, Salta, Santiago del Estero and Tucumán), Cuyo (Mendoza, San Juan and San Luis) and Patagonia (Chubut, Neuquén, Río Negro, Santa Cruz and Tierra del Fuego).

of registered private employment, with a regional distribution similar to that of cooperatives at the territorial level.

Conclusion

Different types of purposes and interests share the need to have access to systematized and comparable information on Argentine cooperatives. Data is essential for the cooperative movement and for researchers and other stakeholders in the sector. Reliable, relevant and good quality statistics are key tools to reflect the reality and the main transformations in the sector. Therefore it is indisputable that it is necessary to count on properly surveyed factual data that may be used without reservations and that allow the construction of relevant indicators.

The above description has highlighted the dearth of relevant data on cooperatives, an assessment shared by a number of authors who on different occasions have underlined the restrictions of the available records.

Nevertheless, an attempt has been made to carry out a general characterization of the sector based on the proposal for the classification of cooperatives by the ILO guidelines based on the primary interest of their members. Following these guidelines, the available sources of public information were consulted, in particular INAES registers for the year 2021. According to the ranking and classification of these data, the category of worker cooperatives occupies the first place, with a significant majority, of around 70% of registrations. Consumer and producer cooperatives follow, at a noticeable distance. Among the former, utilities cooperatives stand out, while in the latter, agricultural cooperatives and provision cooperatives have similar participation.

This first approach to characterizing the sector—in spite of the deficiencies found in the public statistics that are available—shows how important it is to enable policy-makers, also affected by lack of information, to deal with various challenges of different legal aspects, which prevents, for example, the INAES or other organizations dealing with cooperatives from gaining access to the administrative data compiled by the AFIP and other provincial entities that have specific information.

In this sense, it would also be important for public bodies to promote cross-referencing of information to make better use of existing data and alleviate the response load for cooperatives, which are frequently required to provide similar information to various agencies. Access to data, while ensuring the confidentiality of the information provided individually by cooperatives,

is a valuable contribution to strengthening the body of information available for the framing and implementation of policies.

Finally, regarding the cooperative movement, it is important to stress the need for empirical analysis in each sector, bearing in mind the importance of backing the formulation of their own strategies and public policies with concrete data. Studies that analyze the behavior of cooperatives over time are essential to identify priorities and establish plans in terms of the sustainability and good performance of the entities.

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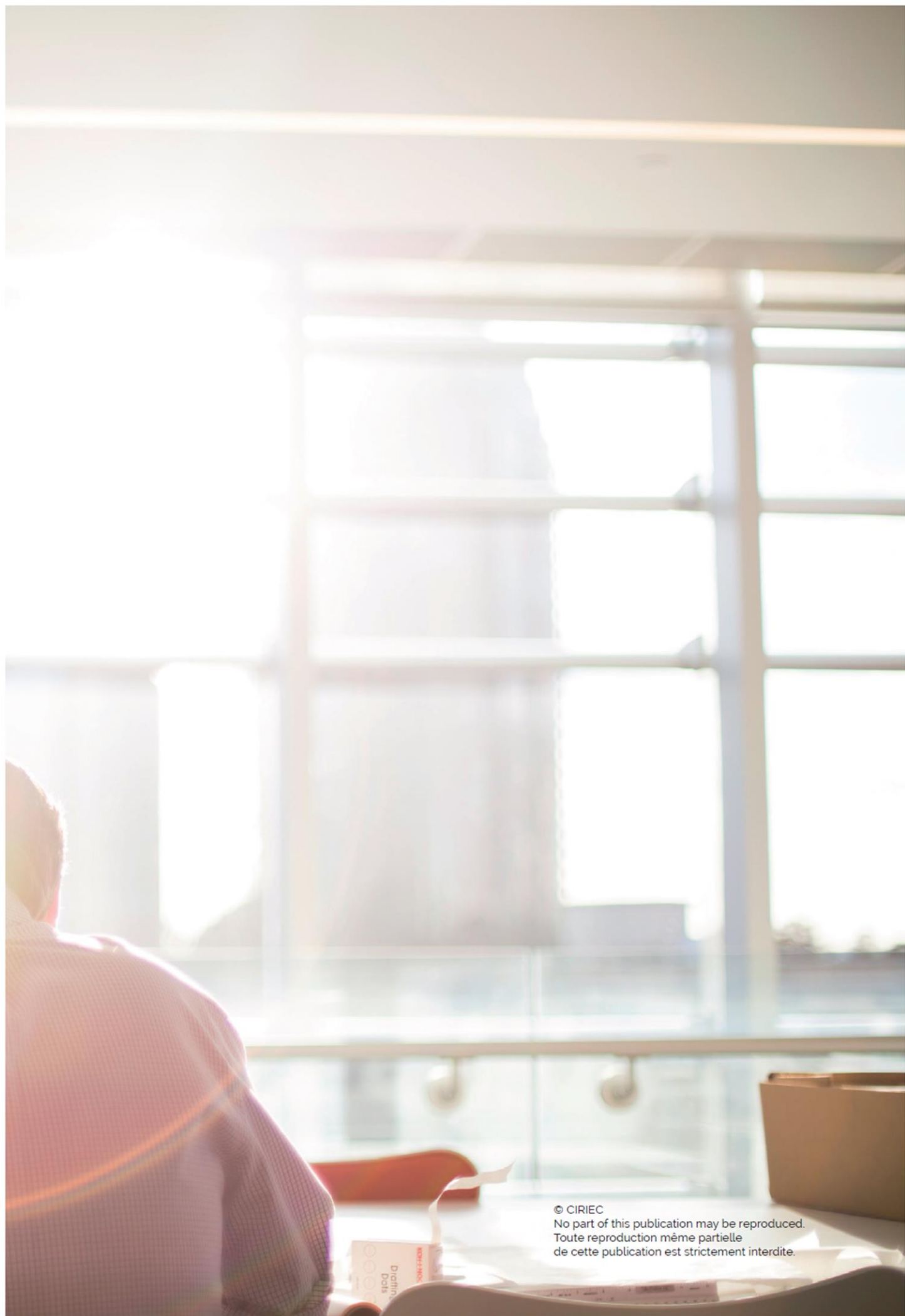
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