ABSTRACT

Purpose: The aim of this article is to improve the model for evaluating the social utility of Brazilian Community Development Banks (CDB), based on the perceptions of managers and users-clients-beneficiaries.

Theoretical Framework: The CDBs are solidarity finance initiatives, inserted in the social and solidarity economy in Brazil, whose purposes are carried out based on their social utility in terms of the results achieved with their model of action for the human, political, economic and social development of the territories.

Method: This is an exploratory and descriptive research using a qualitative approach. Data was collected through a documentary survey, field observation and semi-structured interviews at the CDB Banco dos Cocos dos based on the categories of social utility (socio-environmental, socio-political, socio-cultural, socio-economic and socio-institutional). The data was analyzed using content analysis.

Results and Conclusions: Of the 35 subcategories of social utility analyzed, 29 were covered by CDB Banco dos Cocos. The socio-economic, socio-cultural, socio-institutional and socio-environmental categories showed the greatest impact on the social utility of Banco dos Cocos, while the socio-political category showed the least impact, signaling the need to strengthen the political empowerment of the population in the territory.

Research Implications: This research’s theoretical contribution includes the reconfiguration of the DECID matrix for social utility evaluation. From the perspective of practical implications, the study aims to contribute to improving the management and evaluation of the CDBs’ actions in their territories.

Originality/Value: The research seeks to show that the actions of the CDBs have a strong social utility integrated into the development and strengthening of the territories, which is greater than their solely economic results.

Keywords: Community Banks, Social Utility, Social and Solidarity Economy, Local Currency, Evaluation.

APRIMORANDO A AVALIAÇÃO DA UTILIDADE SOCIAL DOS BANCOS COMUNITÁRIOS BRASILEIROS: UM ESTUDO NO BANCO DOS COCAIS

RESUMO

Objetivo: O objetivo do artigo é aprimorar o modelo de avaliação da utilidade social dos Bancos Comunitários de Desenvolvimento (BCD) brasileiros, considerando a percepção de gestores e usuários-clientes-beneficiários.

Referencial Teórico: Os BCDs são empreendimentos de finanças solidárias, inseridos na dinâmica da Economia Solidária, no Brasil, cujos propósitos são mobilizados mediante sua utilidade social em função do resultado alcançado com seu modelo de atuação para o desenvolvimento humano e social nos territórios.

Método: Trata-se de pesquisa exploratória e descritiva, com abordagem qualitativa. A coleta de dados foi realizada através de levantamento documental, observação em campo e entrevistas semiestruturadas no BCD Banco dos
Cocais com base nas categorias de utilidade social (socioambiental, sociopolítica, sociocultural, socioeconômica e socioinstitucional). A apreciação dos dados foi efetivada através da análise de conteúdo.

**Resultados e Conclusão:** Das 35 subcategorias de utilidade social analisadas, 29 foram contempladas pelo Banco dos Cocais. As categorias socioeconômica, sociocultural, socioinstitucional e socioambiental evidenciaram maior impacto na utilidade social do Banco dos Cocais, enquanto a categoria sociopolítica apresentou menor impacto, sinalizando a necessidade de fortalecimento do empoderamento político da população no território.

**Implicações da Pesquisa:** A contribuição teórica da pesquisa envolve a reconstrução da matriz DECID de avaliação da utilidade social. Na perspectiva das implicações práticas, o estudo pretende contribuir para o aperfeiçoamento da gestão e avaliação das ações dos BCDs nos seus territórios.

**Originalidade/Valor:** A pesquisa procura evidenciar que a atuação dos BCDs auxilia o desenvolvimento e fortalecimento dos territórios.

**Palavras-chave:** Bancos Comunitários, Utilidade Social, Economia Solidária, Moeda Social, Avaliação.

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**1 INTRODUCTION**

Since the beginning of the 2000s, there has been a significant increase in social and solidarity economy organizations (SSEO) in Brazil, whose commercial relations are based on the values of trust and solidarity (Culti, 2010; Gaiger, 2014; Silva & Carneiro, 2016). Such initiatives arise as a response to problems faced by needy populations, in communities, neighborhoods or municipalities, outside of State action and market interests. In this context, Community Development Banks (CDB) emerge as a solidarity financing option that aims at the socioeconomic inclusion of the poorest people in broader processes of local development.

The national expansion of CDBs has drawn the attention of researchers who have been undertaking their studies through different analytical lenses (Menezes, Santos & Mariano, 2019). Several studies have shown that CDBs are characterized by their social utility, as the operating methodology, principles and efforts are directed towards the development of territories, in the most different dimensions (Abreu, 2020; Leal, Cavalcante & Coelho, 2020; Lopes, Rigo & Silva Junior, 2018; Silva Junior & Rigo, 2022; Silva Junior, Rigo & Passos, 2015). The social utility of a SSEO is established to recognize that this type of organization has a multidimensional contribution from its performance (Gadrey, 2005; Fraisse, 2006; Branger et al., 2014). For example, in the case of solidarity finance organizations such as CDBs, the recognition of their success cannot be limited to their economic viability, but rather expand the analysis and make it multidimensional. Thus, based on Silva Junior and Rigo's (2022) social utility assessment matrix, this research aimed to analyze the actions that could shape the social utility of CDB Banco dos Cocais, considering the perception of its managers and users–clients–beneficiaries.

The understanding of social utility that evokes in this study finds support mainly in Gadrey (2004, 2005) and Fraisse (2006). For Gadrey (2004), social utility researchers are faced with the question of the concrete content of this concept under construction and whether the evaluation criteria and methods make it possible to verify the existence of social utility. For Fraisse (2006), the verification of the social utility of SSEO has become a requirement to establish their legitimacy in relation to governments and public opinion. Hence the interest of these institutions in favoring the construction and testing of tools that allow them to identify...
and measure the social results of their activities on their environment. Furthermore, this study is based on the DECID Matrix for assessing social utility, developed by Silva Junior and Rigo (2022), and its suitability for five dimensions (categories) and 35 indicators (subcategories) more aligned with the methodological feasibility of this study. From a practical perspective, the research aims to contribute to improving the management and evaluation of CDBs’ actions in the territories.

That said, we conclude this introduction where we briefly present the purpose of the study and its thematic focus. Next, in the theoretical framework, we focus on the notion of social utility, relating it to the challenges of its evaluation and highlighting its multidimensional character. We also present the dimensions and indicators that we found with the literature review in a framework applied to the case studied – the CDB Banco dos Cocais, in São João do Arraial, in the State of Piauí, northeast of Brazil. Next, we analyze and discuss some of the results in dialogue with the theoretical framework. Finally, we draw the conclusions of the study where we highlight suggestions for future actions by Banco dos Cocais in the territory and future research that addresses the gaps opened up by this investigation.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section is divided into two parts which we intend to present, in the first subsection, a brief history and highlight the essentiality of the multidimensional perspective of social utility, as well as, in the second subsection, present the relationship and application of the assessment of social utility in scope of SSEOs.

2.1 Social Utility: Some Demarcations and its Multidimensional Characteristics

The genesis of the social utility of civil society organizations began in 1973 in France and its emergence was marked by the fiscal dimension, when the State Council of that country determined that associations, in order to obtain tax exemption, had to prove that their services were not provided by the market or had a lower cost than that of private organizations. From then on, associations would be entitled to this benefit upon proving their social utility, and at the same time, they could remain competing in the market (Silva Junior et al., 2015).

From the 1980s onwards, the use of the term intensified, and given the actions of associations with the unemployed and economically vulnerable, the social utility of these organizations was linked to the consequences of unemployment in society. In view of the new tax instructions and considering the jurisprudence of the Council of State, the notion of social utility expanded and greater possibilities emerged in its interpretation (Branger et al., 2014).

The term has been consolidated in the French legal framework since 2000, when work, research and studies funded by the French Interministerial Delegation for the Social Economy also intensified and teachers, researchers and public authorities began to coordinate scientific investigations into the term. theme. In 2014, French law No. 2014-856 was created with a view to regulating the social and solidarity economy, which did not precisely define the concept of social utility, but conceptualized enterprises with the objective of social utility as those whose social purpose comprises at least one of these conditions:

- Aim to offer, through their activities, support to people in situations of economic or social vulnerability, or because of their fragile personal health situation.
- Have the intention of contributing to the fight against exclusion and health, social, economic and cultural inequalities or work towards education for citizenship, the preservation and development of social ties or the strengthening of territorial cohesion.
- Contribute to sustainable development in its economic, social, environmental and
According to Gianfaldoni (2004), the criteria for organizations that present social utility are based on maximizing positive externalities and minimizing negative externalities. In this sense, services of this nature are economically useful because organizations fulfill collective and socially useful economic missions, and tend to restore or strengthen social ties (solidarity and community). We note here the emphasis on the social performance of its economic production.

The term "social utility" has gradually become a characteristic of the social and solidarity economy, helping to understand and recognize the specificities of these activities in comparison with the profitable public and private sectors (Branger et al., 2014). In this way, the use of the concept of externality in the assessment of social utility introduces a reflection on the collective benefits of SSEO. In this way, the social and solidarity economy could be defined not by what it is (its social objectives, its solidarity functioning), but mainly by what it produces (its socioeconomic and sociopolitical effects), as mentioned by Fraisse (2006).

According to Gadrey and Jany-Catrice (2012), the social utility of an organization can be understood as its objective and results that contribute to the reduction of economic and social inequalities, including the affirmation of new rights, to expand solidarity (local, national and international) and also with the improvement of collective conditions for sustainable human development (including education, health, culture, environment and democracy).

In turn, Gadrey (2004) and Fraisse (2006) agree that the expansion of social utility in France brought advances to the process of evaluating organizations and public policies in general. For Gadrey (2005), social utility researchers are faced with both the question of the concrete content of this concept under construction and whether the evaluation criteria and methods make it possible to verify the existence of social utility.

The verification of the social utility of SSEO involves some dimensions or components, namely: a strong economic component understood from the point of view of the economic wealth created or saved (known as “cost avoidance”); a social component due to the collective benefits for society (social equality, gender equality, social cohesion), an environmental component (protection of ecological resources); in addition to a political component presented to highlight that social and solidarity economy is engaged in the shared definition of public policies and living in society (Branger et al., 2014).

For Gadrey (2005), social utility assessment instruments must include five dimensions: economic contributions; combating exclusion and inequalities with a focus on human and sustainable development; the social bond of proximity and participatory democracy; social and solidarity innovation and, also, the effects of external contagion of internal social utility. The author emphasizes that, among these dimensions of evaluating social utility, the main dimension will depend on the type of associative entity.

Therefore, there is no single definition of social utility, but several important themes from which each one - depending on the values and the previously defined context - will be able to develop their own approach (Réseau…, 2012). Based on the various works on the subject, five dimensions are often chosen to construct criteria of social utility, they are: territorial (territorial anchoring, animation of the territory and proximity); economic (efficiency, creation of activity, response to a need); political/societal (co-construction of public interest, active citizenship, participatory democracy); social (insertion, equal access, diversity); environmental (respect for the environment). In this sense, Branger et al. (2014) states that such dimensions are necessarily incomplete since the content of social utility is the result of a social
construction, dependent on the relationship between the government and the various statuses of the social and solidarity economy, as well as the methods mobilized.

In turn, with regard to the conceptualization of evaluation, Brandão et al. (2005) explain evaluation as a systematic and intentional learning process that an individual, group or organization intends to go through to deepen their understanding of a given social intervention. Overall, Minayo et al. (2005) define evaluation as a systematic process of questioning the merit and relevance of a subject, a proposal or a program. The authors state that, when it comes to social programs and projects, their contributions to advances in citizenship and human rights must be evaluated.

In view of this, it is necessary that the construction of the evaluation process of organizations and actions with social purposes allows an understanding of the institution and its focus. According to Boullosa and Araújo (2010), this is important for the evaluation of social programs and projects, which seek to transform a given socially vulnerable reality. Although Silva et al. (2014, p. 202), understand that “the interest of Brazilian society in monitoring and evaluation practices has grown exponentially over the last two decades”, the panorama of evaluation practice in organizations that work in the social field reveals a scenario that which still do not have their activities and projects evaluated in the necessary quantitative density.

There is still the most problematic scenario: part of the evaluations are conducted in the form of an interpretation of the evaluation models applied to commercial organizations and the indicators do not exactly reflect the objective of organizations in the social field. Bringing these considerations closer to solidarity finance institutions, Boullosa (2012, p. 85) exposes a perception that also grounds and justifies this article, which is to state that the field of social and solidarity economy is still rarely considered an object of evaluation. And we understand that this premise necessarily extends to solidarity finance organizations, such as CDB.

2.2 The Assessment of Social Utility in CDBs

Several works on CDBs point out that their actions bring individual and collective benefits in the economic, social, political, cultural, housing and educational areas, highlighting the social utility of such organizations. For França Filho (2013), the sustainability of SSEO, like CDBs, is defined as a plural sustainability that involves social, political, cultural, environmental dimensions, in addition to the economic dimension. Therefore, evaluating the sustainability of these ventures means being able to understand and measure the social utility of such practices.

The assessment of social utility in the context of CDBs, according to Silva Junior et al. (2015) concerns its legitimacy based on collective benefits generated for society, which involve social and gender equality, social cohesion and the protection of environmental resources. Therefore, the demand for evaluation seeks to legitimize the actions of such institutions, both in the economic and political fields. The author also states that the vision of value and social utility allows us to verify the capabilities of CDBs to self-organize and develop an effective associative dynamic; establish cooperative relationships based on trust and solidarity; reinforce the feeling of belonging and identity that links a group or individual in a given territory; respond to rights related to economic democracy and seek sources of renewable financing, related to the local context. Therefore, the ability of CDBs to socially impact and contribute to users and citizens in various aspects (social, political, economic, cultural, environmental, technological) is recognized as social utility. However, the verification of this social utility is difficult due to the complexity of the nature and subjectivity of the actions of these institutions (Silva Junior et al., 2015), and due to the difficulty inherent to evaluation processes in general.

Lopes, Rigo and Silva Junior (2018) warn that evaluators and researchers must pay attention to several aspects in evaluations, such as: the economic-financial dimension should
not be the only one considered in an analysis, which needs to be multidimensional; the objectives may not be clearly stated, as there are other interests that influence and motivate the evaluation; it is not necessary to isolate the evaluated object from its contexts, considering that the reality of evaluation is also a social construction of those evaluated and evaluators; it is not appropriate to simply apply quantitative approach techniques, as qualitative methodologies are the only ones capable of detecting, in depth, the nature of the relationships that involve the evaluation process; the evaluation will not only be useful if it points to positive impacts, since the correction of flaws indicates organizational progress and, finally, the evaluation is not part of the organizations’ culture, and must be built. The authors emphasize that obstacles of this type can be resolved, as well as those related to fear of the evaluation itself.

In the understanding of França Filho (2013), the sustainability of SSEO, like CDBs, must be defined as a plural sustainability, that is, involving social, political, cultural and environmental dimensions in addition to the economic dimension, which is not, just mercantile. According to the author, evaluating sustainability in social and solidarity economy practices represents the ability to understand and measure the social utility of such initiatives. Based on this perception of plural sustainability, Silva Junior and Rigo (2022) developed a multidimensional conception of evaluating the social utility of CDBs and condensed the existing theoretical body on social utility. In its assessment proposal, it incorporated the principles of sustainable development, considering the social, economic, ecological, spatial-territorial, cultural and political dimensions, proposed by Sachs (1996).

In this sense, the authors developed the DECID Matrix, made up of five dimensions: socioenvironmental (solidarity values – social bond), sociopolitical (equity values – citizenship), sociocultural (identity values – territorial cohesion), socioeconomic (sustainability values – plural economy) and socioinstitutional (governance values – social management). As the social is the macro domain on which the actions of CDBs are based and take place, all the other aspects are subordinate to it, meaning that all the dimensions are first and foremost social (Silva Junior & Rigo, 2022). Each of the proposed dimensions has a particular focus, its own competencies, specific indicators and an objective destination.

França Filho (2013) highlights that the social dimension mainly involves the ability to foster cooperative relationships based on trust and solidarity as the foundation of its actions. According to Branger et al. (2014), this dimension is manifested by the strengthening of social ties, the construction of cooperation networks, the "stock"/accumulation of social relations established in the territory and the contribution to regional development and solidification of local democracy. The multidimensions of social utility are integrated by the social bias, priority and common to all dimensions. However, each dimension has some specificities that we will explain in detail.

The first of them is the socio-environmental dimension of the CDBs, which focuses on the values of solidarity to strengthen the social bond and is responsible for revealing the socio-environmental conditions for well-being and sustainability with a view to achieving social cohesion in the territory (França Filho, 2013; Silva Junior & Rigo, 2022). In this dimension, a concern with aspects related to solidarity, human development and sustainable development is identified. For França Filho (2013), the environmental dimension needs to include practices that, in their resource sources, consider renewable resources and related to the reality of their local environment.

The socio-political dimension of the social utility of CDBs has as its scope the values of equity for increasing citizenship, whose competence is to reveal aspects of improving access to public services and the perspective on the community with a view to political empowerment in the territory (França Filho, 2013; Silva Junior & Rigo, 2022). In this dimension, we see the focus on promoting health, education and improving the quality of life to achieve citizenship.
According to França Filho (2013), the political dimension must consider the capacity of initiatives to act in the public space, to form networks and to organize themselves politically.

The sociocultural dimension of the social utility of CDBs focuses on identity values to strengthen territorial cohesion, with the competence to reveal territorial equity and the exercise of individuals’ co-responsibility and ethics in order to achieve a sense of territorial belonging (França Filho, 2013; Silva Junior & Rigo, 2022). The cultural dimension must include practices that contribute to expanding the sense of belonging, of common identity that integrates a group or the subject’s relationship with a certain territory (França Filho, 2013).

The socioeconomic dimension of the social utility of CDBs is equivalent to the values of sustainability through the plural economy and is responsible for revealing the plural economic contributions to the economic well-being of the community to achieve economic plurality in the territory (França Filho, 2013; Silva Junior & Rigo, 2022). According to França Filho (2013), this dimension includes economic solidarity, where relationships of trust and solidarity practices are the foundations of business. This dimension involves economic plurality, which has different logics for allocating resources or ways of producing and distributing wealth. This is the hybridization of economies, which means the simultaneous and intricate consideration of the mercantile economy (market), the non-mercantile economy (state) and the non-monetary economy (reciprocity).

The socio-institutional dimension, governance values are highlighted through social management, which seek to reveal the process of construction and participation in management and the social innovation of actions and projects carried out with a view to achieving democracy in management (França Filho, 2013; Silva Junior & Rigo, 2022). For Silva Junior and Rigo (2022), this dimension involves the internal governance of the organization, as well as social and solidarity innovation, considering possible external propagation effects, to respond to socioeconomic needs not provided by the State or inaccessible to the market. Therefore, based on Silva Junior and Rigo (2022), we summarize the five dimensions of the Social Utility of CDBs and their main indicators, to be observed in Table 1.

Table 1. Dimensions and indicators of the CDB’s social utility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions (Categories)</th>
<th>Indicators (Subcategories)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Socio-environmental              | 1. Autonomy and empowerment  
                                        2. Social relationships  
                                        3. Responsible consumption  
                                        4. Human development  
                                        5. Education and environmental protection  
                                        6. Short economic production circuits |
| Sociopolitics                    | 7. Culture and information  
                                        8. Infrastructure and transport  
                                        9. Health and education  
                                        10. Telephony and internet |
| Sociocultural                    | 11. Equal opportunities  
                                        12. Community participation  
                                        13. Construction of common spaces  
                                        14. Records of local history and memory  
                                        15. Associativism  
                                        16. Fight against gender and sexual orientation violence |
| Socioeconomic                    | 17. Creation and maintenance of jobs  
                                        18. Creation, conservation and recovery of enterprises  
                                        19. Social currency  
                                        20. Production of wealth in the territory  
                                        21. Solidarity networks  
                                        22. Local consumption  
                                        23. Combating local violence |
Improving the Social Utility Evaluation of Brazilian Community Banks: A Study on Banco dos Cocais

24. Financial education
25. Technological innovation
26. Participative management
27. Volunteering
28. Social innovation
29. Replication of the banking methodology
30. Production of knowledge about the territory
31. Production in science and technology
32. Strategic partnerships
33. Technical guidance
34. Transparency
35. Organizational learning

**Socio-institutional**

*Source:* Adapted from Silva Junior and Rigo (2022).

For França Filho (2004), the performance of CDBs is directly related to the understanding and exercise of citizenship, as social, cultural and political objectives are priorities. From this perspective, some authors highlighted the positive impact on citizenship as a result of the actions of CDBs (Santana, 2011; Leal, 2013; Ferreira, 2014). The investigations by Araújo (2009), Silva (2013) and Frison (2015) make preliminary reflections on the phenomenon, providing evidence of the relationship between CDBs and the promotion of citizenship. Rigo and Cançado (2015) point out the community articulation fostered by CDBs as a practice aimed at achieving the rights of individuals, as well as the exercise of participatory local democracy.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

This section focuses on presenting the methodological aspects related to the study so that the reader is aware of the choices and paths that led to its results. Thus, with regard to the work methodology, an exploratory-descriptive research was carried out, whose main strategy was the basic qualitative study, aligned with the techniques of non-participant observation, documentary survey and semi-structured interview.

Two managers and six users-clients-beneficiaries were interviewed, based on semi-structured scripts, covering the construct of social utility, specifically 35 subcategories of social utility, distributed in the socio-environmental, socio-political, socio-cultural, socio-economic and socio-institutional categories. Then, the interviews were transcribed, the collected material was systematized and the content was analyzed.

For Mayring (2000), the strength of qualitative content analysis is that it analyzes the material step by step, with strict methodological control. According to Bardin (2016), content analysis follows three steps: pre-analysis, exploration of the material and treatment of results. In the pre-analysis, the categories and subcategories of analysis were defined based on the theoretical contribution and the base files for the information were created. In the material exploration phase, the interviews were read and relevant excerpts were selected. In the results processing phase, summary tables were prepared for analysis and presentation of results considering the multiple triangulation of theories, methods, data sources and researchers.

### 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents, in a first subsection, the actions of CDB Banco dos Cocais analyzed based on the multidimensionality (socio-environmental, socio-political, socio-cultural, socio-economic and socio-institutional) of its social utility for the territory where this CDB is located. In a second subsection, the results obtained are exposed and discussed based on a table that systematizes them.
4.1 The CDB Banco dos Cocais and its Social Utility for São João do Arraial

The analysis of social utility in its socio-environmental category made it possible to understand that the management of Banco dos Cocais has sought to promote well-being and sustainability in São João do Arraial through actions aimed at expanding autonomy and human and community, strengthen social relations in the community, encourage responsible consumption and value human development in order to achieve social cohesion and strengthen the values of solidarity in the territory.

The analysis also pointed out that initiatives to promote education and environmental protection, as well as practices to encourage short economic production circuits, were reduced, which may require more effective actions from CDB Banco dos Cocais, in order to achieve the objectives proposed in this context. The results identified in the socio-environmental category can be validated based on the assumptions of França Filho and Silva Junior (2009), for which the social utility of CDBs must consider their contribution to the training and qualification of people, as well as to the strengthening of social relations based on the values of trust, loyalty and solidarity.

The appreciation of social utility carried out from the sociopolitical category allowed the understanding that the managers of Banco dos Cocais have been seeking to expand access to public services and the perspective on the community through the appreciation and encouragement of culture, as well as the acquisition and improving housing, aiming to strengthen equity values to expand citizenship. The findings are based on Branger et al. (2014), for whom social utility claims a political dimension consubstantial with the social and solidarity economy. Intrinsic to the ways in which their organizations and regulations are structured, this political dimension is highlighted to highlight that the social and solidarity economy participates in the definition of public policies and shared life in society.

In this sense, the aspects not yet covered by Banco dos Cocais with regard to the provision of complementary health and education services, the promotion of access to information, telephony and internet, as well as mobility within the territory, may come to compromise the individual and collective capabilities for political self-organization, associative dynamics and the creation of networks, fundamental to the process of political empowerment of the community in São João do Arraial.

The examination of social utility carried out through the sociocultural category made it possible to understand that territorial equity and the exercise of individuals’ co-responsibility and ethics have been promoted by the administration of Banco dos Cocais through organizational practices that seek to promote equal opportunities, encourage community participation, the sharing of common spaces, the recovery of records of local history and memory, as well as stimulating associations.

From this perspective, Fraisse (2007) emphasizes that the right of association is recognized as a “first good” not subject to immediate demonstration of its social utility, allowing actors and associative networks to strengthen their capabilities to set up their projects, develop their activities, claim their strengths and negotiate with their partners. The examination of this category also demonstrated that initiatives aimed at combating gender-based violence and sexual orientation have not been worked directly with users-clients-beneficiaries, an aspect that needs to be better observed by CDB Banco dos Cocais so that territorial cohesion and the sense of belonging can be enhanced in the municipality.

In this way, the results of the sociocultural category corroborate the understanding of Fraisse (2006), for whom the recognition of the added social value, collective benefits and positive externalities of SSEO on the part of society is fundamental, and may convince potential financiers and local authorities on the need for public co-funding of such organizations.
Gadrey (2005) highlights that the social utility of an SSEO, like CDBs, is not dissociated from the economic component. On the contrary, a characteristic of the social utility of these enterprises lies precisely in the strong economic component they carry. However, this component is at the service of the social utility of the enterprise, the collective benefits produced and the endogenous development generated in the territory.

The investigation of social utility in its socioeconomic category allows the understanding that the plural economic contributions and the economic well-being of the community have been leveraged by Banco dos Cocais in São João do Arraial through management initiatives that aim to generate and maintain jobs; create, conserve and recover enterprises; encourage the use of Cocal; produce local wealth; establish solidarity networks; encourage local consumption; combat violence in the area and educate the population financially. However, encouraging technological innovation was an aspect not considered by the management of CDB Banco dos Cocais and, consequently, financial and digital inclusion in the territory, as well as the territory itself. The growth of the CDB may be harmed, requiring managers to adopt strategies that can reverse this situation so that economic plurality can be maximized in the territory.

França Filho and Silva Junior (2009) explain that the social utility of CDBs lies in their constitution, which is radically different from other organizations. Its way of acting in the territory determines this particularity based on close relationships and adoption of substantive values in business practices such as trust, solidarity and citizen participation. Furthermore, CDBs operate in a field of activities whose demands are not met by either the market or the State. Its institutional role, being extremely relevant for the territory, cannot be performed in the same way by another entity, be it a company, non-governmental organization or the public authorities themselves (França Filho & Silva Junior, 2009).

In view of this, the investigation of the social utility of CDB Banco dos Cocais through the socio-institutional category made it possible to understand that the process of construction and participation in management, as well as the social innovation of actions, projects and methods have been promoted through joint efforts to make more participatory management, through the voluntary work of managers, through the stimulation of social innovation, through the replication of the CDB methodology, through the production of knowledge about the territory and production in science and technology, through the formation of strategic partnerships and through the technical guidance of users-clients-beneficiaries.

Aspects relating to the exercise of transparency and aimed at organizational learning were not covered by CDB Banco dos Cocais, a fact that could hinder the democratic and participatory process of social management, demanding corrective actions on the part of managers in order to enhance the purposes of the CDB so that governance values are further strengthened in the community.

4.2 Synthesis of Results

In short, the evidence highlighted by the different categories of social utility is in line with the understanding of Gadrey (2004), for whom social utility is the activity of an organization that has the result and objective of contributing to the reduction of economic and social inequalities, social issues, including the affirmation of new rights, solidarity (local, national or international) and the improvement of collective conditions for sustainable human development (including education, health, culture, environment and democracy).

To summarize the considerations on the social utility of CDB Banco dos Cocais, we created a summary table (Table 2) that systematizes the results found.
According to Table 2, of the 9 (nine) subcategories of the socioeconomic dimension, 8 (eight) were verified at Banco dos Cocais. Of 6 (six) subcategories of the sociocultural dimension, only one was not found. Of the 10 (ten) subcategories of the socio-institutional dimension, only 2 (two) were not included. In turn, the 6 (six) subcategories of the socio-environmental dimension were perceived. Finally, of the 4 (four) subcategories of the sociopolitical dimension, only 2 (two) were observed.

Thus, the dimensions that stood out the most were the socioeconomic, sociocultural, socioinstitutional, and socio-environmental dimensions, with the sociopolitical dimension showing less emphasis in the set of social utility actions in the case studied. Therefore, we understand that the subcategories associated with the sociopolitical dimension, as the one that presented the smallest number of actions, require attention and future interventions from CDB management to intensify initiatives of this nature, considering that the political empowerment of the community is fundamental for the development of the territory.

For Gadrey (2005), a definition of social utility not based on a list of criteria, but which has received very broad approval, is that of Thierry Guillois (made in the 1998 review of French tax legislation). Gadrey (2005) indicates that, for Thierry Guillois, there is social utility when the community, in a broad or restricted sense, also benefits from the effects produced by associative services, and that this collective benefit is sought as such by the association. Thus, considering this conception of social utility, we understand that Banco dos Cocais is
configured as an SSEO with an important social utility in the territory, insofar as its efforts have been focused on collective benefits and, effectively, the community comes benefiting from associative services in São João do Arraial.

The general results achieved show that CDB Banco dos Cocais qualifies its social utility insofar as its actions are aimed at producing collective benefits and generating societal value in São João do Arraial. In this sense, the results of the analysis of social utility while presenting the benefits arising from the operations of Banco dos Cocais in São João do Arraial also point out the areas that have not yet been covered (or could be) by its action. From this, we understand that the performance of a CDB in a given territory involves continuous improvement work to be carried out through collective construction for the common good, requiring, for this purpose, financial and institutional support from other civil society organizations, the State and the market. This finding confirms what Bizarria et al. (2022) when analyzing the impact of social entrepreneurship in favelas, in a network, in Brazil, or what was observed by Zampier, Stéfani and Dias (2022) when seeking to identify the performance of cooperatives in interinstitutional articulation for the development of their territories from achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) during the coronavirus pandemic.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Analysis of CDB Banco dos Cocais' social utility actions with its managers and users-clients-beneficiaries, reinforced by documents and field observations, allowed the identification of the management strategies implemented by Banco dos Cocais that enabled development and have had a strong impact on the territory. Still, it is necessary to consider that some socially useful actions still need to be carried out or improved in order to maximize the potential of Banco dos Cocais as a development agent in the municipality of São João do Arraial.

Nevertheless, it was possible to identify that Banco dos Cocais can be considered an SSEO of effective social utility, considering that its efforts aim to contribute individually or collectively to improving the living conditions of the population that has been benefiting from its services in the municipality.

The research contributes to the topic of social utility that has been discussed in Brazil for a decade, mainly with regard to the use of the DECID matrix for evaluating the social utility of CDBs, proposed by Silva Junior and Rigo (2022). In this process, the matrix was configured into categories and subcategories of qualitative analysis, by condensing the indicators from the original matrix and, finally, five new subcategories were inserted to complement the version developed by the author.

Furthermore, considering the special circumstances surrounding the Banco dos Cocais' foundation, an initiative of the local city hall, the research contributes to the study of the development and implementation of public policies on the social and solidarity economy. In this way, the information collected and the results achieved by the research can support other studies under this specific bias and help the development of new research complementary to this one, in the field of Economics, Sociology, Social Management and Public Administration. This work also presents some practical contributions that can assist in the management of CDB, by suggesting some management aspects that could be improved by CDB Banco dos Cocais.

The empirical investigation carried out using the DECID matrix for evaluating the social utility of CDBs made it possible to point out some suggestions for the social utility actions of CDB Banco dos Cocais. In the socio-environmental category, “environmental education and protection” initiatives could include the development of environmental education booklets, lectures and awareness-raising seminars on reducing the use of natural resources, material reuse and waste recycling programs, as well as enabling implementation of basic sanitation projects.
in the municipality. In order to increase the “short economic circuits of production” in the territory, it may be advisable to intensify the financing of activities related to family farming, extractivism and services in general, prioritizing the granting of credit for such businesses.

In turn, in the sociopolitical category, to provide “access to culture and information” in the community, we recommend the adoption of some measures, such as providing community spaces for physical or virtual libraries, computer labs and cybercafes. An alternative for access to “telephony and internet” in São João do Arraial would be to establish alliances with companies in the sector to create and make viable specific products aimed at the needs of the local population, such as rural internet, among others. With regard to “infrastructure and transport”, initiatives in this area, on the part of CDBs, are generally related to encouraging the use of bicycles and public transport. Regarding the issue of “health and education”, we suggest actions to improve health services, such as partnerships that enable medical, dental and psychological care, projects to reduce chemical dependency, malnutrition and infant mortality, among others. With regard to the area of education, the offer of preparatory courses for Enem, courses on citizenship education and projects to combat illiteracy are examples of actions to be implemented.

For the sociocultural category, actions aimed at “combating gender-based violence and sexual orientation” can be mirrored in initiatives similar to those of the Palmas Institute, which created the female incubator to help women at risk to integrate into the local network of producers and consumers, providing medical and psychological assistance, food, professional training and productive credit. Regarding the socioeconomic category, we suggest actions related to “technological innovation”, which concerns the availability and use of the “e-dinheiro” application for the general population, including as an alternative for paying Citizen Basic Income, or other public income transfer programs and social aids.

For the socio-institutional category, actions aimed at “organizational learning” are recommended, such as holding seminars on the principles, purposes and management processes of Banco dos Cocais for users-clients-beneficiaries, in addition to the use of ICTs to offer modular courses on-line or in person to young people about how CDB works. We also recommend that partnerships be established between CDB Banco dos Cocais and organizations that work with training in order to enable organizational learning and other training through strategic partnerships.

One of the limitations of this study is that we did not obtain the perception of local babaçu and jaborandi coconut extractivists, who could not be interviewed in this research due to the great difficulty in accessing users-clients-beneficiaries during the coronavirus pandemic. We understand that the perception of these specific users-clients-beneficiaries can collaborate in subsequent studies, adding to the analysis the female perspective of coconut breakers on the phenomenon, as well as revealing the strategies adopted by extractivists to preserve the environment and their own survival.

Furthermore, we suggest research into the perception of merchants, service providers and non-users/customers regarding the performance of Banco dos Cocais to promote citizenship in São João do Arraial, in order to make a comparison with the perceptions of managers and users/client/beneficiaries who, according to Santos et al. (2018), enable a triangulation of data sources in order to compare perspectives and minimize biases resulting from a single analysis perspective.

Still regarding the agenda for future studies, no socially useful actions by Banco dos Cocais related to health and education were identified; telephony and internet; combating gender-based violence and sexual orientation; technologic innovation; transparency and organizational learning. Future studies may allow analyzes to elucidate the causes of the absence of these initiatives, in order to make them viable, considering that the verification of the social utility of SSEOs, such as CDBs, has become a requirement to establish their
legitimacy in relation to governments and public opinion (Fraisse, 2006). Finally, we identified that the sociopolitical dimension of social utility had the lowest incidence of actions. Therefore, we suggest a future study to investigate the extent to which the differentiated process of creating CDB Banco dos Cocais has any relationship with this result, an aspect already questioned by Pacheco (2016), in a previous study.

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