


# The Mondragon Case: Companies Addressing Social Impact and Dialogic Methodologies

International Journal of Qualitative Methods  
Volume 20: 1–9  
© The Author(s) 2021  
DOI: 10.1177/16094069211058614  
[journals.sagepub.com/home/ijq](https://journals.sagepub.com/home/ijq)  


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## Abstract

Mondragon Cooperative (MC) is one of the most outstanding examples of worker cooperatives in history. It has maintained its cooperative values along its trajectory, being competitive in the international market since 1956, under the motto: ‘Humanity at work’. Recently, scientific research has focused on impact, which has led to the emergence of the Successful Cooperative Actions (SCAs). Based on the case of MC, the scientific literature has identified key actions of this business model that can be transferred to other corporate contexts. Using a methodological approach, it is key to identify the SCAs that MC implements, which could apply to other cooperatives with similar principles but not the same success. This study aims to analyse the methodological innovation in qualitative research when the aim is focused on the transferability of the social impact of MC to other contexts. This paper shows that research focussing on the identification of SCAs modifies qualitative methodology by focussing on the transferability of actions to obtain social impact.

## Keywords

Action research, case study, community based research, emancipatory research, methods in qualitative inquiry, social justice

## Introduction

To improve living standards, the United Nations specifies 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), an urgent call for action by all countries in global collaboration. Goal 8 is related to Decent Work and Economic Growth, which explains the increase of studies addressed lately to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all (UN, 2020). In this line, this article aims at detailing how qualitative research can determine key actions for business success, considering the specific experience of the Mondragon Corporation (MC), as one of the most outstanding examples of worker cooperatives that demonstrate the success of non-capitalist alternatives. MC is a group that can be globally competitive without giving up cooperative principles.

The methodological change in qualitative research emerges when the study’s objective is focused on identifying the transfer of Successful Cooperative Actions (SCAs), characterised by being universal and transferable to different contexts. This type of research is possible when mediating between the particular

and the universal, grasping the translocally and transnationally shared experience of global contingencies (Bosco & Harris, 2020). Accordingly, the qualitative research methodologies that mainly contribute to better capturing the social impact of research integrate egalitarian dialogue and democratic participation as their key features. Qualitative methodology increases the visibility of how science can be at the service of citizens (Aiello et al., 2020; Sordé et al., 2020).

Recently, some scholars have been addressing what is known as a transparency revolution in qualitative research

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(Büthe et al., 2015; Moravcsik, 2014). Piñeiro and Rosenblatt (2016) point out that researchers have worked on methodological innovations to improve the quality and relevance of the qualitative analysis. Methodological innovation is considered a cornerstone for the ongoing success of the social science disciplines (Wiles et al., 2013). However, the challenge remains about how to guarantee social impact through research. Therefore, qualitative researchers have been creative when experimenting with different techniques, methods and methodologies to explore and analyse social life and disseminate their results in response to these challenges (Coffey, 2011). For this reason, citizens are increasingly involved within the entire research process (Davies et al., 2008; Radstake et al., 2009), promoting the bottom-up approach in research. Methodological innovation becomes one of the main aspects to achieve the continued success of social science disciplines.

The impact of MC is evident in three different spheres, namely, scientific, economic and societal (Besselaar et al., 2018). First, in terms of scientific impact, the study of MC has supported the creation and dissemination of high-quality new knowledge among the scientific community. For instance, authors affiliated to the University of Mondragon have published 955 articles in the Web of Science between 2010 and 2020. MC's experience has also been reflected in books (e.g. Latinne, 2014; Thomas & Logan, 1982; W. Whyte & Whyte, 1991) or doctoral dissertations (e.g. Agirre, 2009; Santos, 2016; Uriarte, 2012). Secondly, regarding the economic impact of fostering all forms of innovation and strengthening the market deployment of innovative solutions, MC provides evidence related to industry and distribution activities that reached 11,608M€ of total sales in 2019, involving 96 cooperatives and 141 plants abroad. Finally, social impacts assume the involvement of citizens, companies, institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which need to be aware of the scientific evidence and progress. Therefore, they can incorporate them into their routines and operations, guaranteeing that these scientific advances are finally turned into social outcomes and benefits. In the specific case of MC, social impact constitutes one of the principal goals of the organisation, as Iñigo Ucin, the President of the Corporation, in a conference at Deusto University last October emphasised: 'The company endures if it brings value to society' (Ucin, 2020). This impact has also been corroborated and studied by different scholars (Flecha & Ngai, 2014; Alcántara et al., 2018; Soler-Gallart, 2017). As an example, Soler-Gallart (2017, p.90) exposes: '[MC] survived either on subsidiaries or on workers' self-exploitation, this group achieved both the efficiency and success necessary to create a different economy'.

The social impact of research has received increasing attention in the last years (Besselaar et al., 2018; Torras-Gómez et al., 2019), especially fostered by citizens claiming much more transparency and accountability of the public investment devoted to research. In this article, we want to analyse further the social impact of research from the point of view of the methodology used, responding to the main research question: What happens when research focusses on the transferability of SCAs? Accordingly, this study aims to analyse the

methodological change in qualitative research when the objective is focused on the transferability of SCAs.

The article is divided into four sections. First, the Cooperative Group is contextualised, making a retrospective of its growth. Second, the research focused on the identification of the SCAs is presented in detail. Third, the study's main findings are presented in this section, detailing the keys identified for the methodological change in qualitative research when the research objective is focused on the transferability of SCAs. Finally, the article describes the concluding remarks drawn from our findings and critical reflections for further qualitative research.

## An Overview of Mondragon Corporation

Mondragon Corporation is recognised for being a socio-economic reality, inspired by the principles of the cooperative experience: *democratic* methods in its organisation and management through *solidarity*. In this line, Forcadell (2005) highlights MC as one of the few organisations that can be seen as a democracy in the current context. Another characteristic value is *participation*, people's engagement and involvement in the management, performance and ownership of its companies, among other corporate values as inter cooperation, grassroots management, education and social transformation.

These cooperatives define themselves as a business project created by and for people, with principles of equity, self-demanding and co-responsibility. The Basque cooperatives of MC were founded in 1955 when a priest, José María Arizmendiarieta, and five of his students from a professional school created an industrial cooperative. On April 14, 1956, the foundation stone of ULGOR (later known as FAGOR) was laid, thus initiating a deeply entrepreneurial local economic culture. In the early 1960s, MC engaged in a domestic expansion process that became international in the 1990s (Flecha & Ngai, 2014). Arizmendiarieta led the experience by converging social Catholicism and local identity, carrying out an example of a utopian self-management society (Molina & Miguez, 2008). Now, with more than 50 years of history, MC is a clear example that cooperatives, if properly organised, can overcome significant structural barriers and expand worldwide.

The Corporation is the first Basque business group and one of the largest conglomerates in Spain, with 81,507 employees. On an international level, it has a large presence, with sales in more than 150 countries, which account for more than 70% of the total sales of the Corporation (Ucin, 2020). Outside of Spain, there are 141 production plants and 14,455 workers. Moreover, the *World Cooperative Monitor* (2019) explores the economic and social impact of the largest cooperatives and mutuals worldwide. MC is the world's leading cooperative group in the industry and utility sector in the ranking by sector. These data show that MC is highly competitive within the capitalist market and, at the same time, is highly egalitarian and democratic (Flecha & Santa Cruz, 2011). It carries out very different activities and comprises credit and social welfare companies, industrial and distribution groups, and a university with important research centres. Mondragon's cooperative

companies are classified under four areas: industry (48%), distribution (47.7%), finance (2.7%) and knowledge (1.6%) (Mondragon Corporation, 2020).

Flecha and Ngai (2014) and Santa Cruz (Cheney et al., 2014) were developing the research on competitive cooperativism. Erik O. Wright was against the cooperative, but the evidence of the research by Flecha and Santa Cruz and the arguments that they provided convinced him to change; not only being in favour of competitive cooperatives but also to initiate a program of research jointly with them (Redondo et al., 2011). That constitutes an example of the social impact of research when the dialogue in social life becomes central for building social innovation and emancipatory social sciences for all (Soler-Gallart, 2017).

From the perspective of social impact, the analysis of what aspects improve society has been considered. In this line, previous studies and research projects have identified various actions that have led to the success of MC, known as Successful Cooperative Actions (SCAs). More specifically, five actions have been identified as helpful for the cooperatives Corporation to succeed in growing in a competitive capitalist market (Flecha, 2012; Flecha & Santa Cruz, 2011):

- SCA1. A banking company to connect all the cooperatives
- SCA2. Investment of profits and humanistic management orientation
- SCA3. Open intellectual debate
- SCA4. Grassroots Democracy
- SCA5. A social security system: *Lagun Aro*

The SCAs are evidence-based solutions and actions that obtain excellent results in diverse contexts, being transferable to different environments. The realisation of these five SCAs has been possible through the social impact approach of the research by studying a unique success story, focussing on the particularities of MC which make the model unique. In this regard, the present article seeks to analyse the impact of the qualitative methodology from the most humanist viewpoint to generate social impact. Specifically, the following section addresses the methodological change in qualitative research when the research focusses on the transferability of SCAs.

### *Impact Research of Mondragon Cooperative*

A critical social theory perspective (Freire, 1972; Habermas, 1971; Wright, 2010) reinforces the reconceptualisation of human beings as narrators and emancipators. This perspective strengthens the relationship between social systems and people, how each one is produced and how it can contribute to their emancipation. Taking a critical view can provide an understanding of meaningful transformation. At the same time, the commitment as social researchers is to provide scientific knowledge of how the social reality can be changed and contribute to overcoming inequalities.

The R&D project led by CREA (2012–2014) about MC is focused on analysing successful actions in economics, which

demonstrates the existence of non-capitalist alternatives as to the starting point for the analysis of the MC experience. Specifically, the R&D project, whose title is ‘The Contribution of Competitive Cooperativism to Overcoming Current Economic Problems’ (CREA, 2012–2014), evaluated the impact linked to the SCAs. However, it was not the first contribution made around SCAs by CREA. The research on this topic was previously conducted, and it continued beyond 2014, once the project mentioned above was completed. Therefore, this article analyses the outputs of the research on SCAs. For the concretion of the analysed research outputs, three criteria were established:

1. Focus on the SCAs.
2. Study of the transferability of the reality of Mondragon to other contexts. This means that the research output must go beyond the diagnosis of the case.
3. Ensure the diversity of authors and scientific contributions in different formats.

To this end, to determine the contribution of qualitative research on SCAs’ transferability, this study analyses one project, a master’s thesis, two doctoral theses and eight scientific articles (see Table 1).

First, the eight scientific articles were analysed, then the different documents related to the R&D project and, finally, the two doctoral theses and the master’s thesis. An analysis table was made, where a first reading was completed with the corresponding evidence, following the elements listed below:

- Methodological justification
- Objectives and purpose of the study
- Methodological techniques
- Other characteristics of fieldwork
- Sample/profiles
- Mondragon key actions identification
- Transferability, as represented in the article.
- Social impact
- Other relevant comments.

After the first analysis, the researchers agreed on the common elements, and it was determined that the results could be structured into three sections, described below. Thus, we address the methodological characteristics during the preparation and data collection of these outputs, considering three main aspects: (1) Thinking research; (2) Preparing the research fieldwork and (3) Data analysis and identification of Mondragon Corporation’s SCAs.

## **Implications of the Qualitative Research Methodology**

### *Thinking Research: Why Study the Reality of Mondragon?*

In qualitative research, case studies are one of the most commonly used methodologies. However, they are considered

**Table I.** Analysed Research Outputs.

	1. <a href="#">Burgués et al. (2013)</a>
	2. <a href="#">Cheney et al. (2014)</a>
	3. <a href="#">Flecha &amp; Ngai (2014)</a>
	4. <a href="#">Flecha &amp; Santa Cruz (2011)</a>
	5. <a href="#">Flecha (2012)</a>
	6. <a href="#">Redondo et al. (2011)</a>
	7. <a href="#">Redondo-Sama (2020)</a>
Articles	8. <a href="#">Santa Cruz et al. (2009)</a>
The proposal, final report and other outputs of the R&D project	‘The Contribution of Competitive Cooperativism to Overcoming Current Economic Problems’ ( <a href="#">CREA, 2012–2014</a> )
Master’s and doctoral thesis	1. <a href="#">Burgués (2014)</a> 2. <a href="#">Rodríguez (2013)</a> 3. <a href="#">Santos (2016)</a>

one of the most complicated to define ([Yin, 2014](#)). According to the main theorists ([Creswell, 2007](#); [Stake, 1995](#); [Yin, 2014](#)), we can specify that case studies are a strategy of inquiry when the researcher explores, for example, a company, an event or a program in depth. The case study research provides an in-depth exploration of the unit of analysis ([Rashid et al., 2019](#); [Smith, 2018](#); [Yin, 2014](#)) through empirical research outputs collected over time. Researchers collect detailed data using a variety of techniques.

A case study design should be considered when the researcher wants to analyse contextual conditions because they believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study or the boundaries are not clear between the **phenomenon and the context** ([Yin, 2014](#)). In the case of MC, the impact on the environment is widely corroborated ([Cheney et al., 2014](#)). MC has been included in the ‘Change the world 2020’ ranking ([Fortune, 2020](#)) in 11th place worldwide, which shows the impact of its contributions to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted at the United Nations in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The company’s interaction with the environment is evident through its daily work around innovation with transformative ambition. In this sense, its objectives emphasise the search for sustainable solutions that balance economic growth, environmental protection and social welfare to maintain the livelihood of the parties linked to the cooperative: workers, suppliers and local communities.

Concerning the case studies, the **uniqueness criterion** is also highlighted ([Merriam, 1998](#)). MC is considered of interest since other cooperatives share the same principles but not the same success. [Greenwood et al. \(1993, p.183\)](#), for example, highlight: ‘The Mondragon cooperatives in the Spanish Basque Country are among the most successful examples of industrial democracy in action anywhere and, therefore, are the subject of worldwide attention and discussion’. Consequently, the characteristic of uniqueness is especially

significant in the Corporation’s study and is reflected in the studies carried out (as an example: [Basterretxea et al., 2020](#); [Bretos et al., 2018](#); [Flecha & Ngai, 2014](#)). Its success has made MC a focus of scientific research, analysing the different fields where the cooperative has an impact. In the financial context, [Moye \(1993\)](#) studied how MC’s group of cooperatives developed competitive advantages through institutions that were initially designed to preserve social priorities. Also, concerning knowledge, [Meek and Woodworth \(1990\)](#), highlighted the importance of the Mondragon education system as a catalyst for their economic and social success. The vision of the founder of the MC, [Arizmendiarieta](#), from the point of view of social innovation ([Whyte, 1995](#)), can also be mentioned as a more transversal example of success. Other examples of success can be the challenges faced by the cooperative to maintain humanist labour systems in a capitalist context ([Cheney, 2002](#)) or the sense of community as a key to their economic success ([Mintzberg, 2009](#)). Not all research has been done to analyse the keys of success to guarantee their transferability to other contexts. However, the research focused on transferability and social impact has allowed identifying the SCAs ([Flecha & Santa Cruz, 2011](#)).

### Qualitative Research Design

The outputs analysed in this project have incorporated the vision of transferability from the beginning of the research. For example, one of the objectives of the R&D project was ‘To identify which aspects of the organisation can be transferred to other public and private companies, as well as to extend the model itself, increasing our society’s capacity to respond to the problems posed by economic crises’ ([CREA, 2012–2014](#)). Alternatively, [Burgués \(2014\)](#) focused mainly on the transferability of cooperative values to other contexts. Other



articles, such as Redondo-Sama (2020), emphasise what elements had to be analysed in the research to make the model transferable to other contexts. Transferability constitutes one of the main elements considered in the related research.

Not all the articles analysed present the results of the fieldwork. However, all of them result from years of research in which there has been a wide range of interactions among the agents involved in MC and CREA. As an example, Flecha and Santa Cruz (2011, p.159) indicated:

The arguments and cases we present in this article are part of a larger project we are developing on the Mondragon experience (Flecha/Santa Cruz forthcoming). They are all the result of extensive fieldwork involving interviews and discussions with Mondragon officers and shop floor workers as well as extensive academic discussions.

In the articles that include explicit fieldwork (Burgués, 2014; CREA, 2012–2014; Flecha & Ngai, 2014; Redondo et al., 2011; Rodriguez, 2013; Santa Cruz et al., 2009; Santos, 2016), two common elements can be observed: the diversity of the participants and the type of questions formulated. Both characteristics are discussed below.

First, in the studies analysed, it can be observed how the **diversity of profiles** has been explicitly requested to consider the different visions, favourable and contrary to the cooperative movement. In fact, in the fieldwork carried out, the participants were detailed, specifically:

1. Key informants from the company itself could provide the strategic vision and explain the different decisions of the organisation.
2. Diverse workers with different responsibilities (e.g. cashier or person responsible for external relations).
3. People from the environment who did not work in the cooperative (e.g. trade union representatives, political representatives of the area, members of the employers' organisation, ex-members and retirees).

For example, in the article by Flecha and Ngai (2014), the fieldwork consists of 28 in-depth interviews of workers holding diverse positions in five worker cooperatives in the Basque Country, including workers in different workplaces, such as managerial posts (13); lower positions (8); temporary worker-owners (4); conventional employees (1) and a retired worker-owner (1).

The diversity of profiles observed in the research analysed (for instance, Burgués, 2014; Redondo et al., 2011; Santos, 2016; or in the project CREA, 2012–2014) provides a broad vision of the reality of MC. This research premise contrasts with unilateral visions that could offer a single perspective of the phenomenon and, therefore, a biased view of reality. In previous academic studies, this diversity of profiles had not been taken into account. For example, W. Whyte & Whyte (1991) showed results obtained in close collaboration with the cooperative, without contrasting opinions. Kasmir (1996) analyses and evaluates MC presenting a conversation with

a worker during a meal as the only empirical proof. On the contrary, the research developed around the methodological strategy of SCAs is not the result of a random coincidence but of a methodological organisation carried out with the premise of broadly representing the object of study. In this sense, the incorporation of diverse profiles is an innovation concerning the research carried out.

From the first encounter with the participants, the researchers explain the techniques to be developed, including the ethical dimension of the research. At the same time, the researchers explain the desire for the transferability of the reality under study and generate social impact. Accordingly, the people contacted for their participation in the research are more collaborative, feeling that they can contribute to the transformation of social reality by sharing their vision of the reality under study. In other words, the egalitarian dialogue and transformative orientation of the research enabled people to offer their network of contacts, thus making it easier to reach people with a broad range of backgrounds, experiences and locations. For example, in the R&D project (CREA, 2012–2014), one of the techniques used implied defining a contact person in each cooperative. Then a first conversation was held about the research and possibilities for collaboration. This contact with the company allowed for joint reflection: 'Which subjects should be incorporated into the research task'? (Redondo et al., 2011).

Interviews were also carried out through snowball sampling with contacts from organisations such as FOROKOOP and KONFEKOOP (Confederation of Basque Cooperatives), who offered to contact various people who could participate in the research (Burgués, 2014; Santos, 2016). From these contacts, interviews could be made with people with representative positions in the cooperatives. However, the fieldwork is not limited to formal channels, as these participants may have a more favourable opinion of the MC. To ensure diversity, other contacts who could offer an alternative vision were also sought. For example, contacts were made with trade unions, both Spanish (CCOO, CGT and UGT) and Basque (ELA Sindikatua and Langile Abertzaleen Batzordeak).

Then, to highlight the **script of the interviews**, as Redondo et al. (2011, p.279) underlined: 'researchers must formulate research questions that point to explanatory elements and make it possible for them to be extended'. For this reason, the script is open, giving people space to discuss the aspects they consider relevant. In general, the questions were open (see Table 2), but sections organised the interview script. In the case of Santos (2016), it is emphasised that it was a structure agreed upon by the participants. Not having a closed script allowed the researchers to inquire about topics that had not been initially considered. In this way, if an interesting and relevant topic for the research arose in a dialogue, it could be raised in subsequent interviews to be analysed in greater depth.

**Table 2.** Type of Script Used in the Interviews of the Analysed Research Outputs.

	It was open, and it is mentioned	It was open, but it is Not mentioned	Not applicable
Burgués et al. (2013)		X	
Cheney et al. (2014)			X
Flecha & Ngai (2014)	X		
Flecha & Santa Cruz (2011)	X		
Flecha (2012)		X	
Redondo et al. (2011)	X		
Redondo-Sama (2020)	X		
Santa Cruz et al. (2009)			X
R&D project	X		
Burgués (2014)	X		
Rodriguez (2013)	X		
Santos (2016)	X		

They were asked questions such as (Redondo et al., 2011, p.278): ‘How can this success be explained? What elements (practices, organisations, policies, principles, values, etc.) make it successful over time? Moreover, once we understand this success, can it be extended to other situations?’ In the climate of dialogue, participants set out their vision as stakeholders and are encouraged to make additional considerations. For example, in the interviews conducted for the investigation of Burgués (2014), when the president of KONFEKOOP, and also a member of Mondragon, was asked about the wage scale, he reflected on why workers remained in the company even though the competitors paid more.

### *Inside Analysis: The Identification of Mondragon’s Successful Cooperative Actions*

By analysing the results, the researcher becomes a facilitator in creating social improvements (Aiello & Joanpere, 2014). The research questions were passed on to the participants to make a joint interpretation of the transferability and impact. The researcher scientifically identifies those SCAs that can be transferred and offers them to the citizens. The assessment carried out in the studies analysed **focusses on identifying those SCAs** that are being developed in MC. Our purpose as social researchers is to determine how they can be transferred to different contexts.

The SCAs were identified through the analysis of the actions implemented in MC. The studies also considered other cooperatives competing in the same capitalist markets as the traditional companies and offering better working conditions. However, this comparison to determine SCAs is not conducted through a supervised experiment with a control and an intervention group. In this type of research focused on social impact, the intervention or experimental group is the MC, but there is no control group. Therefore, one of the methodological innovations to promote transferability is that the control group is replaced by society or other successful cooperatives’ experiences. That means that the research analysis

focusses primarily on those aspects that are successful in each cooperative. Once the successful elements are specified, they are contrasted to determine which are common and not. This type of analysis allows researchers to determine common aspects between companies. However, it also highlights the unique characteristics of MC, which are as crucial as other common aspects in terms of scientific progress.

Denzin and Giardina (2009) noted the need to develop methodological strategies for researchers involved in improving social justice to assume a more active role. In this line, the analysed studies detail the actions that provide the best results in any business context (Flecha & Santa Cruz, 2011; Flecha, 2012) based on the participation of the agents and the analysis of the results focused on their transferability. As shown in the different research studies, the analysis does not conclude with detecting the SCAs. The researcher promotes the transferability of knowledge by bringing the evidence to the citizens to do the transferability of SCAs and, therefore, achieve social impact (Flecha, 2012).

### **Final Remarks**

The SCAs contribute to the economy and society, providing venues to overcome social and economic exclusion and sustained and inclusive economic growth that leads to progress, creating decent jobs for all, and improved living standards (aim 8; UN, 2020). Research methodologies must be adapted to this new business and social challenges, becoming the bottom-up approach a starting point of change within the qualitative methodology (Davies et al., 2008; Radstake et al., 2009). Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to analyse the methodological innovation in qualitative research when the aim is focused on the transferability of the social impact of MC to other contexts. The main findings of this research are detailed below.

Firstly, regarding the first aspect contemplated in the results section, ‘thinking research’, the emphasis is on selecting appropriate research cases, like MC. It has been demonstrated

the relevance of identifying a suitable research context and the specific value of analysing singular cases, which have already reached a relevant and recognised social impact. It means that selecting the case study and using an approach oriented to social impact are keys when ‘thinking research’.

Secondly, the qualitative research design, the selection of participants and the formulation of appropriate research questions to broadly understand the phenomenon and analyse its success from different perspectives are crucial for analysing the social impact obtained and understanding how it has been generated. When the interviews’ scripts are analysed, it can be seen that mainly they included open questions, where the structure was clear and previously determined, but allowing at the same time the emergence of information and data that could enrich the findings beyond preliminary considerations of researchers. The aim was to establish an egalitarian dialogue that gave space for relevant issues to emerge. It is also important to point out that one of the methodological innovations to promote transferability is that the control group is replaced by other comparable experiences, in cooperatives, that could be successful or not, or by society.

Thirdly, when the inside analysis is conducted to identify SCAs, the objective is to analyse through these case studies how to guarantee the transferability of successful actions, specifically those SCAs that research has shown to be universal and transferable to different cooperative contexts. The compromise of researchers includes acting as facilitators of social improvements based on knowledge transfer, so this study is focused on analysing how this transfer has been completed in the case of MC. The five SSCAs’ transferability is a complex issue and requires research experience and significant involvement of all social agents. The results of this research show how workers and community participation help in the identification of the main SCAs. This type of research represents a change in the focus of the qualitative methodology, which moves from focussing on the diagnosis of the causes to the promotion of the transferability of the SCAs, using a research methodology approach (Büthe et al., 2015; Coffey, 2011; Wiles et al., 2013). The identification of SCAs also benefits cooperatives and companies in the traditional capitalist system, which can also apply some of the identified actions without the need to become a cooperative. This could create more sustainable jobs and benefit from the resilience they have in economic crises.

In conclusion, the analysis carried out in this article sheds light on essential debates that open paths for future research in the field of social impact. Proposing the focus of research on the transferability of SCAs is a methodological innovation. Therefore, future research should broaden the methods used in this study and continue analysing the keys to improve qualitative methodology to enhance and guarantee the transferability of SCAs.

### Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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