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SOCIAL ORIENTATION OR ECONOMIC INTEREST? THE EFFECT OF GENDER COMPOSITION OF FOUNDING TEAMS IN COMMUNITY-BASED ENTERPRISES (INTERACTIVE PAPER)

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≈ INTERACTIVE PAPER ≈

SOCIAL ORIENTATION OR ECONOMIC INTEREST? THE EFFECT OF GENDER COMPOSITION OF FOUNDING TEAMS IN COMMUNITY-BASED ENTERPRISES

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Principal Topic

Extant entrepreneurship research posits that women are more aligned with social rather than economic goals than men (Brush, 1992; Hechevarria et al., 2016). Most gender studies focus on traditional businesses and it is not clear how gender's differences operate in other businesses such as community-based enterprises (CBEs), which are expected to be naturally oriented towards gender equality and social goals (Nippierd, 2012). We examine in CBEs how gender composition of founding teams influences the business' initial motivations, ongoing achievements and subsequent challenges. Following Cliff's (2005) call, we contribute with empirical evidence in how businesses evolve at different business outcomes: motivations, achievements and challenges and whether they tend to weigh on social or economic side.

At the same time, a significant theme in the ongoing research on women-owned businesses has been the importance attached to work-family balance (Connelly, 1992), yet we know little about how the presence of women in CBEs management teams affects family policies. This study analyzes the effect of gender leadership on the implementation of these policies within the business.

Method

We use data from the Brazilian government Solidarity Economy Enterprise Database for 2009 and 2010. The solidarity Economy represents an alternative economy driven by principles of cooperation, self-management and reciprocity (Miller, 2010).

Results and Implications

Our results show that while the percentage of women in the founding team has a positive influence on the social motivations and achievements of the business, it does not influence its social challenges encountered. We also find that the presence of women in the founding teams has a positive influence on the implementation of family-friendly policies and this effect remains regardless of whether we take or not into account specific gender policies such as maternity and kindergarten. We contribute by shedding light on how gender dynamics within entrepreneurial teams in CBEs affect in different ways social motivation, achievements and challenges of the business. We shed light on how to better design and implement work-family balance policies, and provide a better understanding of the roles and characteristics of women as entrepreneurs in economic life.

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