

Influence of social capital on the local development processes of two municipalities of Matanzas province

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Abstract

Objective: To evaluate the influence of social capital on the local development processes of two municipalities of Matanzas.

Materials and Methods: Social capital constituted the inquiry scope and was evaluated through a survey that comprised five aspects: associativity, confidence, participation, access to information and economic independence. For the work focal groups were formed, with 10 inhabitants, which belong to the 10 settlements of higher population concentration in two municipalities of Matanzas province, for a total of 100 surveyed people. The data were analyzed through descriptive statistics using frequency histograms. In addition, the study variables were correlated. All the analyses were carried out with the statistical package InfoStat[®], version 1.1.

Results: To execute their personal goals, in 80 % of the people's councils the population only trusts their relatives and friends, as warrant of their development and their family's development. In 50 % of the councils, people perceive that, although they are informed and consulted, they rarely participate in decision-making. In six from the 10 councils with which the work was conducted, the citizens consider that the government establishes ways so that there is permanent access to updated, sufficient and pertinent information for the work they perform.

Conclusions: In the studied scenarios, social capital constitutes a key element as resource for development. In turn, it supports interpersonal and organizational interactions, and allows to understand that such capital is a product of the system of economic, political, cultural and institutional relations of the territory.

Keywords: social capital, local development

Introduction

In the research that studies social development it is increasingly frequent to find differences among societies, justified by the capacity to organize their resources and by the levels of articulation and confidence among institutions and citizens to undertake future projects.

The topic of social capital (SC) has been analyzed in literature from diverse perspectives: as the value derived from social relations and the capacity of individuals to become related among them, and as the value that represents the aspects of social structure which involves individuals and their possibilities of access to the available resources in the network.

Generally, the conceptualizations of SC are aimed at understanding the important functions of social networks¹ as facilitators of exchange and access to resources and as a way for individuals to make the actions of others possible, from confidence norms and cooperation bonds (Vite-León, 2016; Medina-González, 2017).

According to Haz-Gómez (2015), the first theorization about social capital is ascribed to Bourdieu (1986). Coleman (1990) and Bourdieu (1986) understand it as the sum of real or potential resources that are linked to the possession of a lasting network of knowledge and mutual recognition, more or less institutionalized, that provides each of the members with the support of socially acquired capital. According to

¹Understood as the set of relations that are established among social actors in order to reach common goals in a given social environment. In such relations, the technological supports of information play an important role as media.

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Coleman (1990), the SC is the value those aspects of social structure, such as the resources that can be used to pursue their interests, have for the actors.

For Coleman (1990), it is rather related to the capacity people have to work in group based on shared norms and values. For this author, unlike Bourdieu (1986), the social capital does not rely on social relations, but on the structure of the network in which the individuals are inserted.

In turn, Putnam (2003) defines it as those aspects of social organization, such as confidence, norms and networks, which can improve the efficiency of a society by facilitating coordinated action. For this author, confidence, reciprocity, social networks and civic commitment, comprise the dimensions of the phenomenon that can explain why certain communities reach higher economic and democratic development levels than others.

Social capital is acknowledged as a relevant intangible resource in the processes of society construction, economic and democratic development which, from the recognition of the difference, based on social values, allows to join efforts and capacities in the face of realities that propitiate better scenarios in which the collective welfare prevails over the management of common goods (Cabrera-Jiménez, 2017).

When considering the relevance of the above-explained facts, in order to improve the human capacities and the transformation of the development context on which there is incidence, this study was conducted, in order to evaluate the influence of social capital on the local development processes of two municipalities from Matanzas.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in the Perico and Martí municipalities, of Matanzas province. Perico is located at the center of an important national road network (central highway and railway). Its total surface is 278,3 km², which represents 2,4 % of the provincial territory. It has a total population of 31 148 inhabitants, distributed in 32 settlements, four urban (25 696 inhabitants) and 28 rural ones (5 452 inhabitants). Perico is the main town of the municipality and, according to data from ONEI (2019), it concentrates 39 % of the total municipal population. Its main economic activity is agriculture, dedicating 70 % to permanent crops and only 13 % to temporary crops.

The Martí municipality is located northeast of Matanzas. It covers 921,47 km² of mainland and 105 km² of keys, which represents 8 % of the total area of Matanzas province. It is ranked third in ex-

tension among the municipalities of this province, with a population of 22 617 inhabitants, distributed in 25 settlements, four urban and 21 rural ones. Its main economic activities are based on agricultural and forestry development.

Before conducting the exploration exercise, a sensitization and work organization process was carried out, through participatory workshops with the actors involved in the diagnosis process. At these meetings, the methodological proposal that would be used with the institutions of the territory and with the team of inquirers, in charge of developing the diagnosis activities, was shared and approved.

For the selection and constitution of this group, it was considered that they were people from the territory with high social commitment, high professionalism and training on the topics to be inquired. Basically, it was integrated by actors from the local government, the municipal university campus, the Pastures and Forages Research Station Indio Hatuey (EPPFIH, for its initials in Spanish) and the advisory team. In all cases, the group was made up with an interdisciplinary approach, so that the access to information and its later interpretation was easy.

For the work, procedures of appreciative inquiry were followed, in order to focus the search and use of the new knowledge on the positive aspects; on those elements and factors of communities (productive systems, organizations and institutions) which have constituted their fundamental support, when functioning best (Whitney, 2010).

The social capital constituted one of the inquiry areas, considering that it represents a highly important element on which incidence should exist from the public administration, because its enhancement and adequate use represent a development opportunity for the municipality. It was evaluated from specific components that increase social control and citizens' cohesion around the government and its body of institutions. In this topic, inquiries were made through a survey that comprised five aspects: associativity, confidence, participation, access to information and economic independence. The variables selected for the study were included in a structured questionnaire, with a battery of possible responses that, for their evaluation, were qualified by means of a scale from 1 to 5 (table 1).

Focal groups were formed with 10 inhabitants, from 10 of the settlements with higher population concentration in both municipalities, for 100 surveyed people in total. The chosen people's councils were identified with the keys A and B and with numbers

Table 1. Definition of the variables to be evaluated to measure local social capital.

Variable	Scale
Associativity When you set out personal goals, do you need to integrate groups in your residence zone to support you?	1-In no case. 2-I count on my relatives. 3-Only if they are very difficult goals. 4-You search for support from known people with mastery of what you want. 5-You look for support from all the people who can help you.
Confidence To guarantee your development you and your family need to confide:	1-Only in relatives. 2-Relatives and friends. 3- Relatives, friends and neighbors. 4-Relatives, friends, neighbors and coworkers. 5-Relatives, friends, neighbors, coworkers and bosses.
Participation Which do you consider is your level of participation in the decisions that have effect on your life in the community?	1-You are neither consulted nor informed in that regard. 2-You are informed, but not consulted. 3-You are informed and consulted, but you do not participate in decision-making. 4-You participate in making the decisions managed by the government. 5-You participate in making decisions managed by the government and exert social control over their results.
Access to information What is your opinion about the situation propitiated by the government regarding access to useful information for your development?	1-The government is indifferent to the citizens having access permanently to updated and sufficient information with pertinence for their individual life projects. 2-The government creates conditions for citizens to have access to updated and sufficient information, but only on topics of collective interest. 3-The government establishes ways for citizens to have access permanently to updated and sufficient information, with pertinence for the jobs they perform. 4-The government establishes an appropriate infrastructure for citizens to have access to information with pertinence for their personal interests. 5-The government promotes the consumption of updated, truthful and sufficient information on topics of personal and social interest.
Economic independence Say which of the following situations you have with your family income sources.	1-Your incomes are not sufficient to satisfy the family's basic needs. 2-Your incomes are sufficient only to satisfy the family's basic needs. 3-Your incomes are sufficient to satisfy the family's basic needs and undertake family improvement actions sporadically. 4-Your incomes are sufficient to satisfy the family's basic needs and undertake family improvement actions systematically. 5-Your incomes are sufficient to satisfy the family's basic needs and undertake family improvement actions systematically and to save.

from 1 to 10, consecutively. The obtained values, which responded to the scale given to each answer, were averaged to make up a mean per evaluated variables for each of the settlements in which the work was done.

The data were analyzed through descriptive statistics with the use of frequency histograms. The study variables were correlated taking into consideration Pearson's coefficient (ρ) and a significance level of

0,05. All the above-mentioned analyses were carried out by the statistical package InfoStat[®], version 1.1.

Results and Discussion

This study inquired about the need of the inhabitants to integrate support groups in their residence zone in order to execute their personal goals. The results showed that the most frequent element

among the inhabitants is that they only have their families for these purposes. In seven people's councils this response pattern was found; while in two councils they turn to family, only if they are very difficult goals. Only in one council they acknowledged looking for support in known people, linked to the topic over which the integration demand emerges (figure 1).

It could be known that in 80 % of the surveyed people's councils the population only trusts their relatives and friends. Only 10 % referred to their

coworkers to find confidence and daily support. It was significant that in no case the inhabitants referred confidence in their leaders, as an important element to guarantee their development and their family's development (figure 2).

In correspondence with the report by Huerta-Wong (2017), the found networks correspond to a higher extent to networks of strong bonds, as long as they are linked with expressive goals, unlike the weak-bond networks, which are related to instrumental

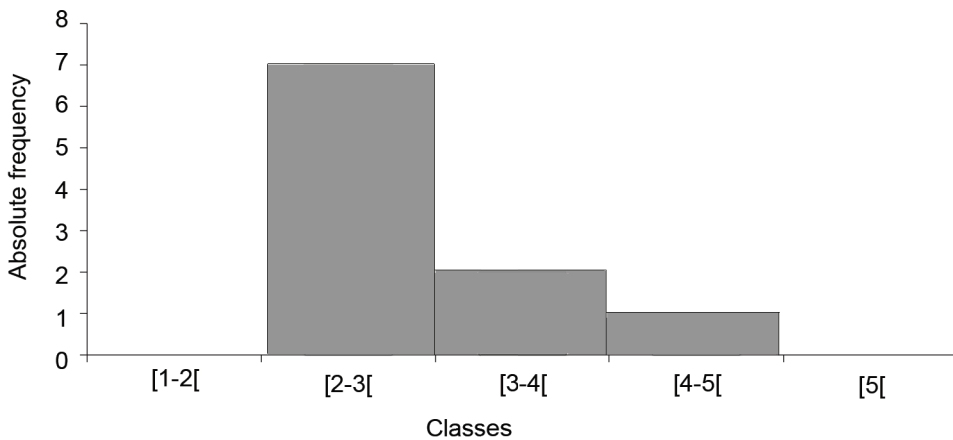


Figure 1. Absolute frequency of the variable associativity per people's council..

1-In no case, 2-You count on relatives, 3-Only if they are very difficult goals, 4- You search for support from known people with mastery of what you want, 5- You look for support from all the people who can help you.

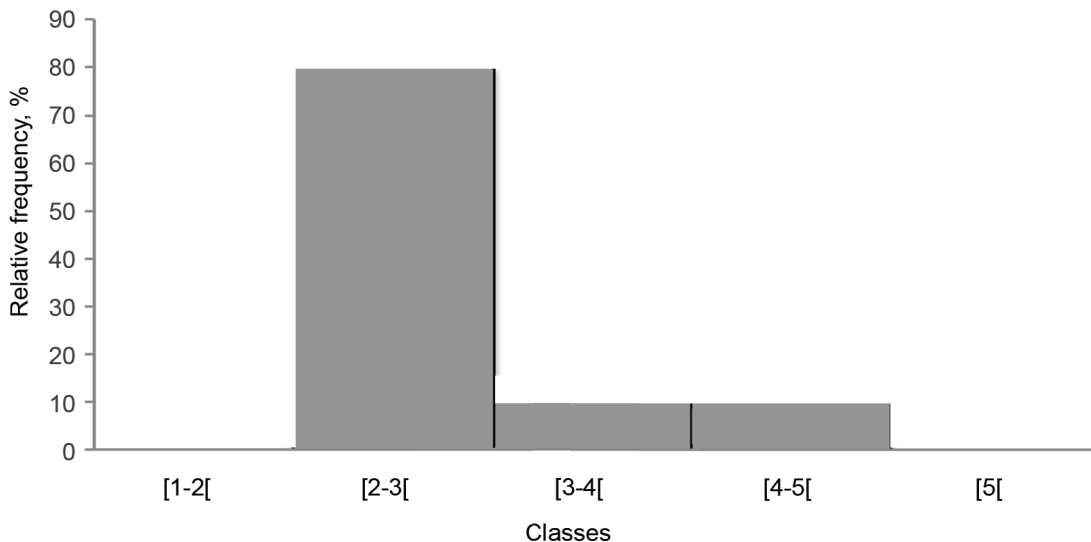


Figure 2. Frequency of the variable confidence per people's council.

1-Only in relatives, 2-Relatives and friends, 3-Relatives, friends and neighbors, 4-Relatives, friends, neighbors, and coworkers, 5-Families, friends, neighbors, coworkers and bosses.

goals, only present in one of the studied people's councils.

According to Caldarelli and Catanzaro (2014), the weak-bond networks are linked to instrumental functions, which are those related to reaching objective and material purposes, for example, obtaining money or a job. The expressive functions, corresponding to strong-bond networks, are aimed at reaching subjective goals and environment protection (taking care of children and sick people).

The theoretical model, defended by Huerta-Wong (2017), establishes that social capital in the form of confidence or bond types has direct and indirect effects on the collective action in the form of membership or associativity, sense of efficacy and participation. Higher interpersonal, inter-institutional confidence and reciprocity lead individuals to be part of associations, with which civic commitment and participation in politics increase.

The basic idea of social capital is that a person's relatives, friends and coworkers constitute an important value to turn to in a crisis, which should be enjoyed in itself and can be used to obtain material advantages. In addition, this, which is true for individuals, is also real for groups. Communities with varied resources of

social networks and civic associations are in a more solid position to face poverty and vulnerability, solve disputes and make the best use of new opportunities (Putman, 2003).

When exploring the inhabitants' perception with regards to the level of participation in the decisions that impact their life in the community, it was known that in 50 % of the people's councils in which the work was done, people think that, although they are informed and consulted, they rarely participate in decision making. In the other people's councils, the inquirers' team found that 30 % consider they are informed, but not consulted. Meanwhile, the remaining 20 % believe that they participate in the making of decisions that are later managed by the government (figure 3).

Regarding the opinion about the function played by the government with regards to the access to useful information for citizens' development, it could be known that in six of the studied people's councils, people consider that the government establishes the way for the citizens to have permanent access to updated, sufficient and pertinent information for the work they perform; while one people's council perceives that, work is also done with schemes that

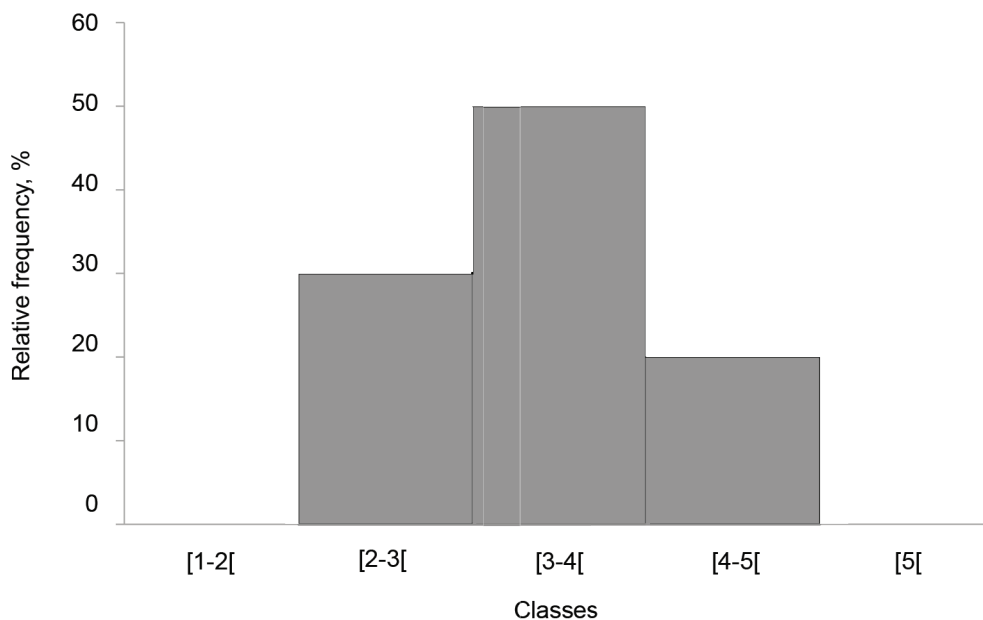


Figure 3. Relative frequency of the variable participation per people's council.

1- You are neither consulted nor informed in that regard, 2- You are informed, but not consulted (2), 3- You are informed and consulted, but you do not participate in decision-making, 4- You participate in making the decisions managed by the government, 5- You participate in making decisions managed by the government and exert social control over their results

allow to tend to, besides, the citizens' interests and personal projects (figure 4).

When inquiring about family incomes, it could be observed that the revenues perceived by family units in no case allow them to save. Forty percent states that the income is sufficient only for tending to the basic needs and doing family improvements sporadically. In turn, 30 % of the surveyed people answered that their income sources are sufficient to satisfy basic needs and, also, to undertake family improvement actions systematically (figure 5).

In this regard, Rojas-Morán (2006) states that it is important to provide local governments with new capacities and new organizational culture to exert the promoter function that corresponds to them. According to his criterion, governments should facilitate the creation of a favorable environment for the development of economic activities and employment generation, with the subsequent improvement of the quality of life. Likewise, they should be generators of economic activities and decent employment (work quality).

The analysis carried out also showed that in the people's councils where there is higher access to information, the economic independence levels are higher, for which, presumably, level and quality of life are enhanced by the timely access to information, which facilitates the establishment of more advantageous

collaboration for all the parties, developed at family and personal level.

When correlating the studied variables, it was proven that between the variables access to information and economic independence there is strong correlation ($\rho=0,80$), for which it is assumed that they are associated phenomena. The economic improvement of the families is linked, in a certain way, to the access to useful information for development (table 2). In this regard, such authors as Aragón-Sánchez and Rubio-Bañón (2005); Pardo-Enciso and Díaz-Villamizar (2014) state that, as a rule, those persons or institutions who have higher information, are the ones who will be more successful. That is why, it is considered as a change and transformation factor.

Dassen and Cruz-Vieyra (2012) define access to information as a key instrument for exercising other economic, social and cultural rights. That is, the right to information allows citizens to define certain circumstances, which can affect their daily life and develop the capacity to make informed decisions and concrete actions to improve their living conditions.

These authors express that the exercise of the right of access to public information enhances the citizens' participation, as well as public policy and management. It is aimed at improving the legitimacy

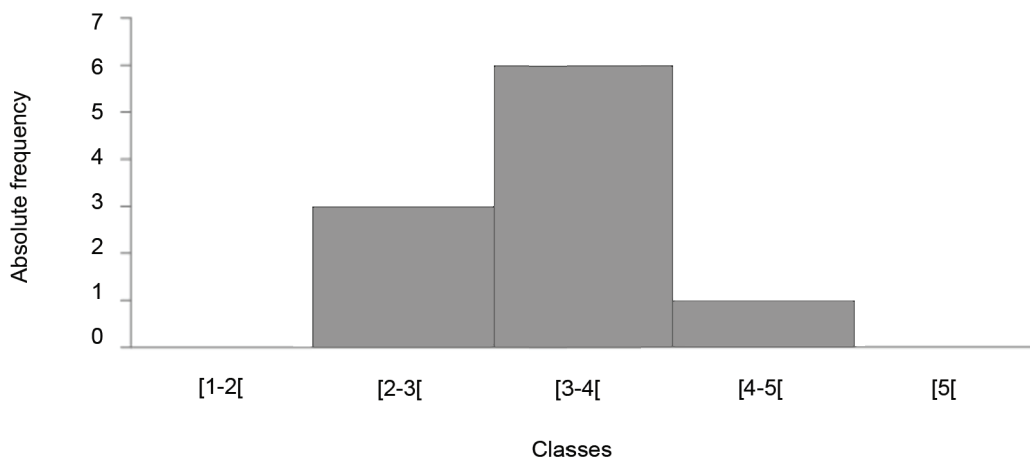


Figura 4. Frecuencia relativa de la variable acceso a información.

1- The government is indifferent to the citizens having access permanently to updated and sufficient information with pertinence for their individual life projects, 2- The government creates conditions for citizens to have access to updated and sufficient information, but only on topics of collective interest, 3- The government establishes ways for citizens to have access permanently to updated and sufficient information, with pertinence for the jobs they perform, 4- The government establishes an appropriate infrastructure for citizens to have access to information with pertinence for their personal interests, 5- The government promotes the consumption of updated, truthful and sufficient information on topics of personal and social interest.

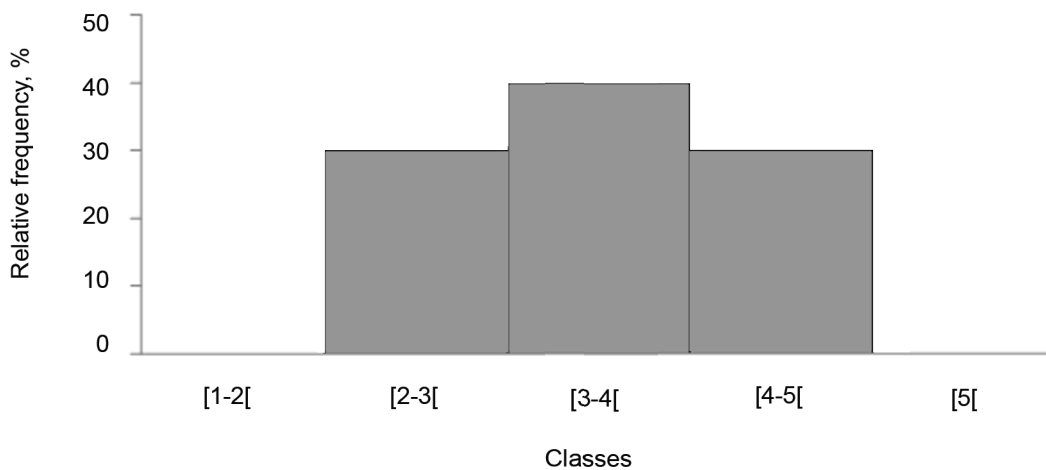


Figure 5. Relative frequency of the variable economic independence.

1- Your incomes are not sufficient to satisfy the family's basic needs, 2- Your incomes are sufficient only to satisfy the family's basic needs, 3- Your incomes are sufficient to satisfy the family's basic needs and undertake family improvement actions sporadically, 4- Your incomes are sufficient to satisfy the family's basic needs and undertake family improvement actions systematically, 5- Your incomes are sufficient to satisfy the family's basic needs and undertake family improvement actions systematically and to save.

Table 2. Pearson's correlation coefficient.

Variable	Associativity	Confidence	Participation	Access to information	Economic independence
Associativity	-				
Confidence	0,49	-			
Participation	0,53	0,32	-		
Access to information	0,20	0,55	0,42	-	
Economic independence	0,36	0,42	0,10	0,80*	-

*The correlation is significant at level 0,05

of governments in the exercise of power, concept that goes beyond the electoral processes, by securing better decision making by public actors and, especially, a better link to citizens and the consolidation of confidence in governmental institutions. Exerting this right allows citizens to be effective counterparts of public administrators for improving their management.

In all cases, the studied elements were evaluated in classes two, three and four, which considering the established evaluation scale, qualify as deficient, acceptable and appropriate, respectively. In the future it would be essential to pay attention to this aspect, if the social capital is to be utilized, as development resource in the municipalities where the study was conducted.

If a perspective is considered from which the territory is defined by development processes, for Cabrera-Jiménez (2017) the important thing is not

the contribution of each economic sector, but what integration of public and private actors originates processes of economic and social improvement, processes that occur formally and informally in the different levels of government, social learning and development-linked innovation.

From this approach, according to Cabrera-Jiménez (2017), a more multidimensional perspective of development is propitiated, because the cultural and social aspects are qualified as relevant; while the usefulness of material, cognitive and social resources people have in the execution of actions that contribute to development, is acknowledged.

The way in which individuals perceive their capacity to make decisions and act consequently, as well as their degrees of integration and quality of their relations with their community, define the levels of social capital of a certain society and reveal it as a

decisive factor to improve human capacities in the creation of propitious contexts for the achievement of inclusive, sustainable development, focused on the human being.

Conclusions

In the studied scenarios, the social capital constitutes a key element as resource for development. In turn, it supports interpersonal and organizational interactions, and allows to understand that such social capital is a product of the system of economic, political, cultural and institutional relations of the territory.

The collective action, associated with participation, allows the materialization of strategies of productive sectors as a way to manage solutions to face daily problems present in the diverse processes of territories. Its understanding and interpretation constitute a substantive aspect in the action for reality transformation, from the required participatory processes.

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Authors' contribution

- Taymer Miranda-Tortoló. Conceived the research ideas and objectives. Wrote and coordinated the financial execution of the projects that funded this study. Collected primary information. Prepared the work for its publication and participated in the pre-publishing correction stage.
- Daniel J. Vela de León. Conceived the research ideas and objectives. Collected primary information. Contributed to preparing the work for its publication.
- Antonio Suset-Pérez. Conceived the research ideas and objectives. Wrote the project that funded this research. Collected primary information. Prepared the work for its publication and participated in the pre-publishing correction stage.
- Hilda Machado-Martínez. Conceived the research ideas and objectives. Wrote the project that funded this research. Collected primary information. Prepared the work for its publication and participated in the pre-publishing correction stage.
- Gilberto Blanco-García. Conceived the research ideas and objectives. Collected primary information. Contributed in the preparation of the work for its publication.

- Katerine Oropesa-Casanova. Conceived the research ideas and objectives. Collected primary information. Coordinated the execution of the project that funded this research. Contributed in the preparation of the work for its publication.
- Ernel González-Mastrapa. Supervised and advised the research activity. Performed a critical analysis and revision of the document for its publication.
- Juan Alberto Alfonso-Llanes. Coordinated, from the municipal authorities, the actions of the project that conducted this research. Coordinated and collected primary information. Contributed in the preparation of the work for its publication.
- Marcos Antonio García-Naranjo. Coordinated, from the municipal authorities, the actions of the project that conducted this research. Coordinated and collected primary information. Prepared the work for its publication and participated in the pre-publishing correction stage.

Conflicts of interests

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of among them.

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