Agricultural Cooperatives for Social Capital Development in Latvia

The paper presents the results of studies devoted to clarifying the role of social capital, and its relation to innovations and development, particularly in rural areas. The latest insights in types and forms of social capital in economic context are described. The development of agricultural cooperatives as an example of social capital has been evaluated. Conclusions suggest that agricultural cooperatives are developing successfully and perform innovative activities.

Keywords: social capital, cooperatives, agricultural, Latvia.

Introduction

Social capital is a rapidly expanding research theme within economics and more broadly across the social sciences; it has also become a popular concept with policy makers in both developed and developing countries (World Bank, 2011). Social capital is a topic of considerable interest to a wide range of people because of its links to individual and community well-being. It is a multidimensional concept, and different elements of the framework may be appropriate for different purposes (OECD, 2001). Social capital relates to the resources available within communities in networks of mutual support, reciprocity and trust (Davis, 2005). The social capital of a society includes the institutions, the relationships, the attitudes and values that govern interactions among people and contribute to economic and social development (Grootaert, van Bastelaer, 2002). Social capital and increasing evidence shows that social cohesion is critical for societies to prosper economically and for
development to be sustainable (World Bank, 2011). Social capital is a relatively new concept in economics (Pugno, Verme, 2012) and social capital research remains in its initial phases (Adam, 2008), inter alia in Latvia.

The research object is development of cooperatives as social capital in Latvia, particularly in rural areas.

The aim of the study or overview is: to assess social capital and innovation relationship; to evaluate social capital and its categories’ (non-governmental institutions, particularly, cooperatives) and assess the development of cooperatives, particularly agricultural, in the rural areas (communities) of Latvia.

The tasks of study are: to clarify the concept of social capital; investigate the social capital relationship with innovations and further sustainable development of rural communities; evaluate some categories of social capital (non-governmental institutions, particularly, cooperatives) development in rural areas (communities) of Latvia.

The principal materials used for the studies are as follows: different sources of literature, research papers and the reports of institutions, data from databases of Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia and Eurostat as well as data from Latvian Association of Agricultural Cooperatives (Latvijas Lauksaimniecības kooperatīvu asociācija) and Ministry of Agriculture of Republic of Latvia (Latvijas Republikas Zemkopības ministrija).

The suitable qualitative and quantitative research methods have been used for various solutions in the process of study: monographic, analysis and synthesis; logical and abstractive constructional; data grouping and comparing; correlation and regression analysis etc.

Theoretical framework

Innovations and social capital. Social capital should ultimately be seen in the context of the contribution it makes to sustainable development. Sustainable development has been defined as a process whereby future generations receive as much or more capital per capita as the current generation has available (UNESCO, 2010). Traditionally, this has included natural capital, physical or produced capital, and human capital as the wealth of nations on which economic development and growth are based. It is now recognized that these three types of capital determine only partially the process of economic growth because they overlook the way in which the economic actors interact and organize themselves to generate growth and development, where the missing link is social capital (Grootaert, Van Bastelaer, 2002; Wolz, Fritzsch, Reinsberg, 2005). Human capital includes the skills and knowledge, which has gathered in formal and informal learning, but the social capital has built through interactions between people, facilitated the learning and use of these skills and knowledge (Falk, 2000). The relationship of all four forms of capital (natural, physical, human and social) is important for well-being and economic growth (Falk, 2000; Grootaert, Van Bastelaer, 2002; Woolcock, 1998). Besides, there is an opinion (Forum for the Future, 2011) that physical or produced capital will be divided into two different capitals: 1) manufactured capital and 2) financial capital.

A number of studies that focused on social capital and the overall well-being of societies support the arguments for the positive effect of social capital on innovation. Social capital, e.g. trust and
cooperation between individuals, and between them and public institutions, can encourage innovation and the adoption of knowledge (Adler, Kwon, 2002; Miguelez et al., 2011). Moreover, E. Miguelez and co-authors (2011) argues that the social capital positively correlates with innovation. Higher levels of human capital enhance social capital, and social capital can support innovation in several ways, predominantly through its effect on trust, shared norms and networking, which improve the efficiency and exchange of knowledge (OECD, 2011). I. S. Akcomak and B. Weel (2009) have argued that: innovation is an important mechanism that transforms social capital into higher income levels; higher innovation performance is conducive to per capita income growth; and social capital affects this growth indirectly by fostering innovation. Moreover, the innovation is an important channel by which social capital improves income growth (Ibid) and the different dimensions of social capital might influence innovative activity in dissimilar ways (Kaasa, 2009). M. Dakhli and D. De Clercq (2004) have argued that trust, both within organizations and in inter-organizational settings, may foster innovation.

Despite social capital not having a clear, undisputed meaning (Dolfsm, Dannreuther, 2003), social capital is a very old idea in sociology, and emerges naturally from a discipline that emphasises methodological collectivism and structure as opposed to the individualism and agency of economics (Gannon, Roberts, 2012). The economic approach to social capital is critically reviewed by S. N. Durlauf and M. Fafchamps (Gannon, Roberts, 2012) who identify three key ideas: 1) social capital generates positive externalities for members of a group; 2) these externalities are achieved through shared trust, norms and values; 3) shared trust, norms and values arise from informal forms of organisations based on social networks. The aspect of social capital to which economists have paid most attention in the literature is its importance for economic growth (Perez et al., 2006).

There are therefore numerous definitions of social capital found in the literature (Adler, Kwon, 2002), e.g., “…social capital comes about through changes in the relations among persons that facilitate action” (Coleman, 1988). Several scholars (e.g. Claridge, 2004; Grootaert, van Bastelaer, 2001; 2002; Gannon, Roberts, 2012; Woolcock, 1998; Woolcock, Narayan, 2000) argue that definition of social capital includes not only the structure of networks and social relations, but behavioural dispositions (such as trust, reciprocity, honesty) and institutional quality measures (rule of law, contract enforceability, civil liberties, etc.), where the relations have been organized by way of conscious association, of self-organisation and organised communication (Narayan, Cassidy, 2001). The most common is the definition of social capital by the OECD, defined as “networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups” (Keeley, 2007). D. Narayan and M. F. Cassidy (2001) identified four dimensions of social capital: informal social ties, formal social ties, trust, and norms of collective action. Moreover, World Bank (2011) stresses that social capital refers to the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions. There are two distinct types of social capital: 1) horizontal, reflecting ties among individuals or groups of equals or near-equals, and 2) vertical
(also referred to as linking social capital). Additional distinctions have been drawn within horizontal social capital, namely bonding social capital (also called localised social capital) and bridging social capital. These are very important and we will look at these in more detail.

There is much debate over the various forms that social capital takes, but one fairly straightforward approach (e.g. Karlsson, 2012; Keeley, 2007; Woolcock, Narayan, 2000) divides it into three main categories:

**Bonding social capital:** links to people based on a sense of common identity (e.g. among family members or heterogeneous groups such as family, close friends and people who share our culture or ethnicity);

**Bridging social capital:** links that stretch beyond a shared sense of identity (e.g. across heterogeneous groups such as distant friends, colleagues and associates); and

**Linking social capital:** links to people or groups further up or lower down the social ladder (e.g. between groups / individuals with differing levels of power or social status).

The benefits of developing social capital are: cooperation between groups; reducing the costs of conducting day-to-day affairs and doing business; facilitating the spread of knowledge and innovation; promoting cooperative and / or socially minded behaviour in situations where narrow self-interests alone do not generate good outcomes for society (Adler, Kwon, 2002). Increasing evidence shows that social cohesion – social capital – is critical for poverty alleviation and sustainable human and economic development (Dolfsma, Dannreuther, 2003), particularly rural areas (Wiesinger, 2007; Zhang, Zhang, 2008).

**Cooperatives as social capital.** Non-governmental institutions are recognized as creators and developers of social capital. The cooperatives, inter alia agricultural cooperatives (Hong, Sporleder, 2007), is one of the form or kind of non-governmental institutions, which play crucial role in social capital's development (e.g. Chloupkova, Bjornskov, 2002; Cooperatives Europe, 2011). Moreover, cooperatives are recognized as an important instrument for socio-economic improvement of the community (Emana, 2009). The United States (US) National Cooperative Business Association (Ortmann, King, 2007) also emphasizes the unique characteristics of cooperatives relative to other (investor-oriented) businesses:

- Cooperatives are owned and democratically controlled by their members (i.e., those that use the cooperative’s services or buy its goods) and not by outside investors. Members elect their board of directors from their ranks. Major policy decisions are based on the one-member, one-vote principle, regardless of each member’s investment in the cooperative;
- Cooperatives return surplus income (revenue over expenses and investment) to members in proportion to their use or patronage of the cooperative, and not proportionate to their investment or ownership share;
- Cooperatives are motivated not by profit, but by providing a service to satisfy members’ requirements for affordable and quality goods or services;
- Cooperatives exist solely to serve their members;
- Cooperatives pay taxes on income retained for investment and reserves. Surplus revenues are returned, according to patronage, to individual members who pay taxes on that income.
Table 1 offers main seven principles of cooperatives and their characteristics.

Different classification of cooperative types is supposed by scholars and institutions, e.g.:

By ownership: owned by residents; owned by consumers; owned by workers; owned by the community; owned by enterprises (Co-operatives UK, 2012). Besides, in USA purchasing and shared services cooperatives are recognized, which are owned by small, independent businesses, municipalities or other like organizations; and hybrid cooperatives, which are generally made up of people with a common interest, but that has not stopped some innovators from developing multi-stakeholder hybrids, which seek to balance the sometimes conflicting needs – for example, between consumers’ desire for affordable products and producers’ desire for higher prices for their goods. In many cases, this is tied to members’ dual roles as producers and consumers, most often in agricultural co-ops, but not always (National Cooperative Business Association, 2012b);

By membership: users’ cooperatives, producers cooperatives, workers cooperatives, social or community cooperatives (Zamagni, 2012);

By activity: such as housing, building, retailer, utility, worker, credit unions, social, consumer, agricultural and political (The Co-operative Group, 2012).

However the importance and influence of cooperatives on society or community, particularly local are widely recognized, the various stakeholders have their specific concern or interest as represented in Table 2.

### Cooperatives as social capital in rural areas

It is suggested (Grieve, Weinspach, 2010) on European level that some indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principle 1: Voluntary and Open Membership</strong></td>
<td>Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principle 2: Democratic Member Control</strong></td>
<td>Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principle 3: Member Economic Participation</strong></td>
<td>Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principle 4: Autonomy and Independence</strong></td>
<td>Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principle 5: Education, Training and Information</strong></td>
<td>Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principle 6: Cooperation among Cooperatives</strong></td>
<td>Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principle 7: Concern for Community</strong></td>
<td>Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

will be used for evaluation of impact Rural Development Programme (RDP) of European Union on social capital’s development (Table 3). Suggested impact indicators incorporate impact of cooperation activities and networking. Table 3 offers not only impact indicators, but also the suggested evaluation questions.

Measuring social capital may be difficult, but it is not impossible, and several excellent studies have identified useful proxies for social capital, using different types and combinations of qualitative, comparative and quantitative research methodologies (Woolcock, Narayan, 2000; World Bank, 2011). One quantitative indicator of social capital development measuring is membership in non-governmental institutions; *inter alia* cooperatives (Wiesinger, 2007). Cooperative ownership of the business is a unique social capital fostering characteristic (Allahdadi, 2011; Majee, Hoyt, 2010). The internationally recognized definition of cooperatives is given by the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA):

### Various cooperative stakeholders and their concerns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Area of concern</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmer / Members</td>
<td>Good price; Equity price; Reduction of risks; Access to the market; Continuity of farming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customers</td>
<td>Food safety; Wholesomeness; Product price; Marketing efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>Financial benefits; Recognition / Pride; Working environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppliers</td>
<td>Price; Stability; Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government (state / local)</td>
<td>Taxes; Prevention of oversupply; Law enforcement; Competition (i.e. no subsidies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society</td>
<td>Sustainable growth; Preventing the outflow of resources; Education and services; Civil rights; Pollution abatement; Employment provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landowners</td>
<td>Good rent on land; Appreciation of land value</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Evaluation questions and impact indicators for the social capital

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment criteria</th>
<th>Evaluation questions related to social capital</th>
<th>Suggested impact indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local identity and coherence strengthened (usually associated with bounding social capital)</td>
<td>To what extent have the RDP measures increased the interaction amongst actors to promote a sense of place and to strengthen community ties?</td>
<td>Number of people participating in collective investments and composition of participants in projects of this type.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking and openness fostered (usually associated with bridging social capital)</td>
<td>To what extent have co-operation and networking increased the economic performance of the area?</td>
<td>Relative number and volume of business / employment arising from cooperation and networking relationships.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To what extent have RDP measures enhanced the actors’ capacity to identify and take up new ideas, tacit skills, etc. and turn them, into innovation?</td>
<td>Number of newly established external relationships to key stakeholders, defined as such stakeholders playing a dominant role in: flows of knowledge; flows of finance; bestowing legitimacy.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

An autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations, through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise” (Birchall, Ketilson, 2009). The acquisitions of social capital from the cooperatives' activities are of two sorts: 1) general social capital and 2) cooperative social capital (Table 4).

Cooperatives are also guided by seven cooperative principles: voluntary and open membership; democratic member control; member economic participation; autonomy and independence; education, training and information; cooperation among cooperatives; and concern for community (Strashok, Dale, 2011).

Taking into account that in rural areas agricultural cooperatives are widely prevalent, the characteristics of agricultural cooperatives are given below. Agricultural cooperatives have contributed greatly to the development of one of the world’s most productive and scientific-based agricultural systems (Smith, 2011) and is characterised by increasingly severe competition (Nilsson, 2006). Agricultural cooperatives are distinguished “…between agricultural service cooperatives, which provide various services to their individual farming members, and agricultural production cooperatives, where production resources (land, machinery) are pooled and members farm jointly” (Smith, 2011). According to G. Hong and T. L. Sporleder (2007) agricultural cooperatives provide following conceptual variables:

- Member patronage;
- Physical relationship in the networks: general structural social capital; cooperative structural social capital; collective actions;
- Trust: generalized trust; social trust; cooperative trust;
- Norms: civic norms, cooperative norms.

### Cooperatives in Latvian rural areas

Although there are different kinds of cooperatives, which are located and operated in Latvian rural areas, the great majority of them are agricultural cooperatives and their share takes 57 % of total number of cooperatives (Figure 1).

#### Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social capital acquisitions from the cooperative</th>
<th>General social capital</th>
<th>Cooperative social capital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structural dimension</td>
<td>• the number of non-member customers</td>
<td>• the number of associations or organizations, which the cooperative joins for business purposes;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• the number of related cooperative associations or organizations which the cooperative joins for business purposes;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• the number of business partners which the cooperative deals with for business purposes cognitive dimension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive dimension</td>
<td>• customer loyalty or satisfaction</td>
<td>• reliability of the partners or organizations that are counted in the structural dimension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective actions</td>
<td></td>
<td>• the number of meetings with partners or organizations that are counted in the structural dimension;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• the number of joint projects or alliance with others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: adapted from G. Hong, T. L. Sporleder (2010).
Since in rural areas agricultural cooperatives are widely prevalent, the characteristics of agricultural cooperatives are given below. In Latvia, the agricultural cooperatives, providing various services for agricultural farmers – agricultural service cooperation, (hereinafter – agricultural cooperatives) are the most important. Agricultural production cooperatives are only few and are based on old fashion Soviet time collective farms – “kolkhoz”. In the last five years the number of cooperatives has increased from 37 in 2004 to 102 in 2006, but in 2010 already 115 cooperatives operated in Latvia (Figure 2), the trend of total number is increasing (coefficient of correlation $r = 0.81$, level of significance $\alpha < 0.05$). However, the increase of total number of agricultural cooperatives does not correlate with number of corresponding or compliant agricultural cooperatives. (For corresponding cooperatives have been granted the conformity status, where conformity of cooperatives is assessed annually, taking into account several criteria). The number of corresponding cooperatives is lower and has been nearly constant in last few years (Figure 2) ($r = 0.26$, $\alpha > 0.05$).

The following benefits are eligible for corresponding cooperatives:

Support under the measures of the Rural Development Programme: “Modernisation of Agricultural Holdings”; “Adding Value to Agricultural Products”; “Setting up of Producer Groups”;

Possibility to receive aid in the form of state subsidies for long-term investments (construction projects) and for the partial settling of interests of short-term credits, leasing and factoring deals;

Exemption from corporate income tax from tax on service cars, and paying only 50 % tax on their trucks;

Eligibility for credit guarantees from the Rural Development Fund, from the Latvian Guarantee Agency; for credit guarantees and from the Latvian Guarantee Agency etc.

The location of total number of agricultural cooperatives differs between regions more than corresponding cooperatives (Figure 3). It could be explained by the high number of small cooperatives in Vidzeme region (Latvijas Lauksaimniecības kooperatīvu asociācija, 2012).

However, the decreasing of turnover was observed in the years of financial and economical crisis (2009-2010), the
Fig. 2. Total number and corresponding number of agricultural cooperatives in Latvia, 2004-2011

Source: author’s construction based on Latvijas Lauksaimniecības kooperatīvu asociācija (2012).

Fig. 3. Location of agricultural cooperatives in the regions of Latvia, 2010

Source: author’s construction based on Latvijas Lauksaimniecības kooperatīvu asociācija (2012).
quick recovering is pronounced. Overall the net turnover of agricultural cooperatives statistically significantly increased (Figure 4) from 2004 until 2012, where $r = 0.93; \alpha < 0.01$; and reached above 200 million LVL in 2012.

In the same period the number of members (farmers) of agricultural cooperatives in Latvia has statistically increased (Figure 5) significantly ($r = 0.94; \alpha < 0.01$) and exceeded 9,200 members in 2012.

Cereals cooperatives are 39 % of all cooperatives and they top the list by number of agricultural cooperatives; milk cooperatives are in the second place with 35 % share; and multipurpose cooperatives with 10 % share rank third (Figure 6).

Latvian crop and milk cooperatives make strong foundation for development.
of these branches and support export activities in Latvia. For example, the turnover of Latvian crop (grain and rapeseed) cooperative “Latraps” was LVL 100 million during the seven months of the last financial year (July 2012 to January 2013)\(^1\). “Latraps” is 100 % Latvian farmers’ company and its success story is that the partnership of the farmers is the means to survive and to strengthen their position in the European market. Over the years “Latraps” has developed its business, which is based on 1) traditional activities: farmers supply of inputs; the grain and rapeseed preparation, storage; grain and rapeseed sales, including exports; trade of agricultural machinery; service and replacement parts; and 2) innovative activities: production of rapeseed oil (press); and the production of bio fuels from rapeseed, cultivated by members.

There are some rural residents’ and farmers’ activities for creating and development of local networks, which create innovative products and services based on both agricultural and natural resources and human skills (artisan products and services, e.g. craft, pottery, basket-making, bath-houses, rural tourism services etc.). These activities, which develop and increase the social capital, have supported by non-governmental institutions such as Rural Partnership associates, various branch organizations, which operate on local community or territorial level. More detailed and deeper studies of above mentioned activities must be performed in further research.

**Conclusions**

The scholars recognize that four types of capital (natural, physical, human and social) determine the process of sustainable economic growth and development, *inter alia* well-being of society. Moreover, the social capital positively correlates with innovation. Social capital can support innovation in several ways, predominantly through its effect on trust, shared norms and networking. Scholars have argued that innovation is an important mechanism that transforms social

capital into higher income levels; higher innovation performance. Social capital is divided into three main categories: bonding social capital (links to people based on a sense of common identity); bridging social capital (links that stretch beyond a shared sense of identity); and linking social capital (links to people or groups further up or lower down the social ladder).

There are three major methodological approaches to evaluate the social capital: the micro-approach emphasizes the nature and forms of cooperative behaviour; the macro-approach focuses on the conditions (favourable or unfavourable) for cooperation; and the meso-approach highlights structures that enable cooperation to take place. One of quantitative indicator of social capital development measuring is membership in non-governmental institutions; inter alia cooperatives.

Although there are different kinds of cooperatives, which are located and operated in Latvian rural areas, the great majority of them are agricultural cooperatives and its share takes 57 % of total number of cooperatives. The results of investigation of development of agricultural cooperatives in the rural areas of Latvia demonstrate that the total number of agricultural cooperatives has increased. Besides, the number of corresponding cooperatives has been nearly constant in last few years, while the net turnover and number of members of cooperatives has significantly increased. This trend has verified the concept that the social capital affects the income growth. Agricultural cooperatives perform both traditional and innovative activities, for example “Latraps” – production of rapeseed oil (press); and the production of biofuels from rapeseed.

Comparing the number of agricultural cooperatives by branch, results show that cereals cooperatives are 39 % of all cooperatives and they top the list by number of agricultural cooperatives; milk cooperatives are in the second place with 35 % share; and multipurpose cooperatives with 10 % share rank third.

There are some rural residents’ and farmers’ activities to create and develop the local networks, which create innovative products and services based on both agricultural and natural resources and human skills (artisan products and services, e.g. craft, pottery, basket-making, bath-houses, rural tourism services etc.). These activities, which develop and increase the social capital, are supported by non-governmental institutions such as Rural Partnership associates, various branch organizations, which operate on local community or territorial level. More detailed and profound studies of the above-mentioned activities should be conducted in future research.

References


The paper submitted: May 15, 2013
Prepared for publication: June 20, 2013

Latvijos kaimo vietovėse yra įsikūrę ir yra valdoma įvairių rūšių kooperatyvai, dauguma iš jų yra žemės ūkio kooperatyvai, kurie sudaro 57 % visų kooperatyvų. Žemės ūkio kooperatyvų vystymosi kaimo vietovėse Latvijoje tyrimo rezultatai atskleidė, jog bendras žemės ūkio kooperatyvų kiekis išaugo. Be to, žemės ūkio kooperatyvų skaičius buvo beveik pastovus per pastaruosius kelerius metus, nors kooperatyvų apyvarta ir narių skaičius ženklingai išaugo. Ši tendencija patvirtina tezę, jog socialinis kapitalas skatina ekonomikos augimą. Analizuojant nevyriausybių organizacijų ir kooperatyvų vystymą Latvijoje, kaip socialinio kapitalo formą, ypač kaimo vietovėse ar bendruomenėse, pastebėta, jog kooperatyvų skaičius yra pastovus pastarasiais metais, nors kooperatyvų grynoji apyvarta ir narių skaičius padidėjo ženklingai. Taip pat, pastebėta, jog žemės ūkio kooperatyvai šalia tradicines veiklos atlieka ir inovacine veiklą. Straipsnyje yra pateikiamos galimos tolesnės moksliškų tyrimų kryptys, t. y. ištirti kitų nevyriausybinių institucijų vystymosi tendencijas, tokių kaip Kaimo Partnerystės asociacijas, kurios veikia vietos lygmeniu.