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Author: Lanki

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8. INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT

WHAT IS UNDERLYING IN THE EXPERIENCE

Both in Arizmendiarieta's thought and in the Cooperative Experience there is an underlying conception of the person and the community. A conception of the person and the community that drives us to progress without rest towards the integral development of the person, towards the realization of their dignity in all its dimensions.

Cooperatives have been one of the possible concretions of this conception of man and this spirit and it has been developed above all in the socio-economic dimension (one of the most difficult and important dimensions).

However, we mentioned in chapter 2 that a certain tendency towards a defensive attitude may exist in the Experience, limiting the cooperative reality to an organizational difference, inevitably in the face of the force of competitive reality and the increasingly popular values in our own society. And we pointed out that the transforming direction of Arizmendiarieta's thought was (and can be, if we assume it) much deeper, **multidimensional** and **ambitious**. And only by advancing in a multidimensional way can we avoid returning to the coherence of a cooperative project.

DIMENSIONS OF INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT

The integral development of man is joined to the integral development of the community, which from an individualistic perspective, whether Arizmendiarieta or cooperative, implies going deeper into the **self-management of more and more human and social environments**. This could be the direction that the current context claims. It is a motivational direction, and at the same time a utopian and feasible direction, a multidimensional and creative direction, perhaps the only direction that can give coherence to the future of the Experience. Without this direction, without this transforming and growing coherence, without this multidimensionality, the Experience's motivational base for the future can be weakened, focusing everything on growing as a company, to technologically form itself and reactively maintain the organizational

difference. All of this is very important and basic, but it is not sufficient for an experience and a view of a cooperative project for the future.

There are many, very important dimensions of an integral development of the person and the community. We can talk about the economic, social, intellectual, linguistic-identifying, cultural, spiritual, artistic or ludic dimensions of the human being. And we can talk, whilst looking correlatively at the community environment, about structures and educational experiences, of an integral University, of multidisciplinary intellectual deepening, of different social environments that can be self-managed, of ludic self-management experiences, of relations with other structures of community inspiration, of possibilities in the international cooperative dimension, of community media, of new positions for retirement, etc. in short, of many real possibilities of development of the dimensions of the community man, **setting up structures and experiences** in the educational, social, or cultural environment, or establishing with the existing new forms of exchange.

The driving thought of the experience does not conceive limiting itself to developing companies with a democratic organization. By going deeper into this line of thought, and into its spirit, we reach the following conclusion: if we do not continue to advance in other fields, to progress towards the "cooperative person" the driving thought loses its coherence, it loses its direction and its force. The Arizmendiarieta spirit is an invitation to creativity in this sense.

It is not necessary to say that all these human and community dimensions are interrelated, that a new educational impulse reverts to the regeneration of the cooperative energy, that the linguistic aspects reverts to the cohesion, that the cultural and ludic aspect have to do with the labour implication, etc., that we come closer to the integral aspect when we integrate.

A DEEPER PROJECT

Joxe Azurmendi, the greatest systematizer in Arizmendiarieta's thought, said in 1996 that it is time to return to the sources and that "a new reflection of the original and originating idea of the project" is imposed. And he summarizes his paper written for Gizabidea in this way:

The final purpose of cooperativism, summarizing today's reflection, is the new society, "the new man/woman". The cooperative company is no more than the starting point. It is necessary to move from business remodelling to social renovation: "A cooperative movement is something like an arch that has not been closed, which does not reach the interaction between the community and the cooperative" (FC, Y, 267-268). We are aware that the objectives are very far away: the ideals are certainly not just a case of stretching out your hand and taking them, but they light up our dark life of struggle from high above. With this ideal,

the cooperative members will have to try to revive local bodies, to participate in municipal activities, "to cooperativize" work, teaching, health, a lifetime, at the service of the community, until the new cooperative community is established.

This idea underlined by Joxe Azurmendi, clearly points towards the concept of integral development that presides over this chapter, and without which it may be impossible to revitalize the Cooperative Experience in the following generations.

This may appear illusory. It is evident that we are aiming very high and very far in this chapter. It is not so evident, but all the same true, that experiences like the Arizmendiarieta experience knew how to take short, precise steps precisely because somebody aimed high. It is a difficult time, as they all are. It is clear that we are starting from a diagnosis of reality (chapter 1) that assumes the weight of standardisation, the drive of individualistic values and the comfortable position of a society that it is within the opulent minority of the planet. We have also pointed out that we are, on the other hand, and in spite of the tendencies, a nation with leading potentialities, with an atypical social and community dynamism within western countries. Assuming the difficult and complex reality, it is the **direction that we take that really matters**, the direction towards integral development, the direction towards the person and the community, starting from the real possibilities that we have here and now (that are always potentially many more than that what is commonly perceived). The idea is, as at the beginning of the Experience, and at all times and in all circumstances, to obstinately believe in the person, to renew the faith in their capacity to be regenerated.

MULTIDIMENSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AS A REQUIREMENT FOR COOPERATIVE REGENERATION

In other chapters we have talked about the importance of thinking about the regeneration and sowing process of cooperative energy in the new generations (we use the word "regeneration" in the sense of "continually generating" and transmitting to the new generations). The idea is to make a strategic reflection on the regeneration of cooperativism. That is to say, it is not only the business dimension (at a company, division or corporation level) that needs strategic management. To a certain degree we have forgotten, perhaps since Arizmendiarieta disappeared, about advancing systematically in the field of thought, in the community and society project that underlies the cooperative idea, in the generational transmission of the educational flow and other key dimensions.

Some people speak of difficulties in keeping the feeling of illusion and implication alive in a large part of the cooperative social body. The following aspects can influence this: the dimensioning of companies, the distancing in time of the foundational energy of cooperative thought and the lack of new encouraging formulations for the ideas-force, the certain weight of individualism, convenience and scepticism tied to the culture of dominant

consumption, whilst for others this is not the case, and the panorama is much more positive. More positive data can be mentioned, and we can be more optimistic or more pessimistic in this respect. However, there is one thing we can agree on: **it is necessary to reflect on the revitalization of the cooperative illusion.**

There are no magic formulas to go deeper into this aspect. The regeneration of the implication and the cooperative energy in the cooperative social body and the new generations is an enormous challenge. It is in this challenge where the fundamental idea of integral development is linked: to progress boldly and with imagination towards new goals in this multidimensional development can become a requirement to revive the Experience and encourage people in the future.

We believe that the future of the **regeneration of the cooperative illusion** will have a **“holistic” meaning**: it must integrate, if it wants to create illusion, aspects such as the economic, ethical, linguistic-identifying, ecological, solidarity-orientated and cultural aspects, in a project of social transformation in accordance with the new human and social sensibilities. Certainly, the passion that generated economic growth as the only goal has ended, as a development paradigm, at least with the level of commitment that we have known. This idea has little potential today for utopian creation in committed and generous people in the new generation. The generating ideas-force of commitment and illusion are now orientated by a less developing-orientated and more multidimensional development. This does not mean we have to neglect growth, but rather combine it with other human needs and provide it with meanings and deep motivations in a more global and encouraging project.

The Arizmendiarieta social project has been a vector from the reality towards a utopia, an obstinate combination between straightforward realism and a radically ambitious transformation project. If we want to **continue generating commitment**, our project for the future will be a project of **real social multidimensional transformation** based on the self-management of the society in more and more aspects, in which economic self-management (cooperative) could be the main driving force, although not the only one. In fact, this was also the direction of the Arizmendiarieta project.

THE CREATIVE TASK

The bottom line of individualist thought, logically reinterpreted and revitalized from the current context and from the new social and human sensibilities, may be a **vastly creative nucleus** for new and very diverse social realizations, to point out new possibilities in the existing cooperative environment, to provide new energies to other community experiences that are already in progress in the environment, to establish a baseline dialogue with all these realities. This nucleus, as you can imagine, exceeds the environment of MCC in power. Even though it exceeds the cooperative corporation, and within it MU, they can still be promoters of this nucleus

and the multidimensional spirit towards human and community integral development, putting some of their means at the service of this task.

Questions for debate:

- The nucleus where the cooperative Experience has been developed is the economic-business world, does our experience connect with a multidimensional social cooperative project?
- What baseline strategies do we have for the revitalization of the cooperative transforming impulse in the new generations?
- What new dimensions should we develop? What structures could be set up to do this?
- What means does the cooperative network, or MCC as a corporation, have at this time in order to cooperate in the creation of structures and experiences in other fields? And what means can we create?
- What nexuses can be established with other community realities in our environment that affect other dimensions of the "cooperative man"?
- What orientation should Mondragón Unibertsitatea take in the path towards the integral development of a cooperative person?