

# Expressing identity in mission statements: a case of Polish social cooperatives

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**ABSTRACT:** The rise of social cooperatives can be related to the blurring of boundaries between sectors in the modern economy and the creation of hybrid organizations, which combine different rationalities in their activities. Despite the defined legal form, they can still express their organizational identity in a variety of ways - adopt a more social or a more market orientation. One of the forms of expression of organizational identity is a declaration of mission, which includes, among others, basic values.

The aim of the article is to: a) identify the types of mission statements in Polish social cooperatives; b) identify the values contained in the mission statements of Polish social cooperatives; c) determine whether the identity of an enterprise, social organization or mutual-support group prevails in Polish social cooperatives.

For the purposes of the research, the contents of the missions of social cooperatives registered in Poland were analysed. 99 missions were identified and analysed using the IRAMUTEQ program. At a later stage, an invitation to participate in the survey was sent out to the 99 social cooperatives whose missions were being researched. The invite was addressed to the managers.

The conducted analyses point to the existence of three main elements in the identity of Polish social cooperatives. The first, and the most developed one, is a social element related to the organization's orientation towards solidarity and its responsibility for the work and social integration of persons at risk of social exclusion, focus on beneficiaries and on their comprehensive service. This identity is related to high prioritization of such value as education. The second exposed element of identity is related to economic activity. The organizations in question see themselves as enterprises that should provide high-quality products and focus on customer satisfaction. This identity is related to values such as professionalism and work engagement, focus on employees and work safety. Matters related to business growth and competition, as well as values such as research and development, growth, product superiority, focus on competitors or company success are much less exposed. The third, least exposed area

of identity has to do with responsibility for the environment and is associated with activities undertaken for the sake of community and environment.

The analysis of the mission statements was supplemented with an analysis of case-specific data obtained in the questionnaire research. Two identities were predominant: enterprise and social organization, while the identity related to community affairs was marginalized.

**KEYWORDS:** Mission statements, social cooperatives, values, organizational identity.

**ECONLIT DESCRIPTORS:** L19, L31, M10, M14.

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# Resumen amplio

## Expresión de la identidad en las declaraciones de la misión: caso de las cooperativas sociales polacas

### Objetivos

El objetivo del artículo es: a. identificación de los tipos de misiones en las cooperativas sociales polacas, b. identificación de los valores contenidos en las declaraciones de las misiones de las cooperativas sociales polacas, c. establecer si en las cooperativas sociales polacas domina una identidad de empresa, de la organización social o del grupo de la ayuda mutua.

### Metodología

Las investigaciones empíricas se celebraron en el primer trimestre del año 2020. La decisión en cuanto a las preguntas y objetivos de la investigación fue precedida por el análisis de la literatura sobre el tema. A continuación, se identificó y analizó el contenido de la misión de las cooperativas sociales registradas en Polonia. Este fue el método: determinación del esquema de codificación, prueba del esquema, recogida de datos, codificación y análisis. A partir de este análisis se formularon las conclusiones de las investigaciones. Luego se hizo la investigación en forma de encuesta a través de Internet. Una parte de las preguntas que se encuentran en el instrumento de investigación preparado servía para la triangulación de los resultados de las investigaciones obtenidos en la etapa anterior y otra parte se refería a la identidad organizativa de las cooperativas sociales desde la perspectiva del equipo administrativo.

Para la identificación de las cooperativas sociales se usaron dos bases de los datos. La primera de ellas – El Catálogo General Polaco de las Cooperativas Sociales- contenía una descripción condensada de la actividad de 1517 organizaciones comentadas (<http://www.spoldziel-niesocjalne.org/index.htm>). La segunda base – colocada en el portal de las organizaciones no gubernamentales- contenía, entre otras cosas una lista de 1565 registros que se identificaron como las cooperativas sociales activas (<https://spis.ngo.pl/>).

Disponiendo de las denominaciones de las cooperativas sociales se buscaron sus páginas web e información contenida en Facebook. Al finalizar las búsquedas, además se completaron los datos mirando todas las páginas web que aparecieron después de haber escrito en el navegador web las expresiones “misión” y “cooperativa social”.

Para ayudar a las investigaciones se analizó el contenido de las misiones de las cooperativas sociales registradas en Polonia. Se identificaron 99 misiones que se analizaron con el uso del programa IRAMUTEQ. En la siguiente etapa se solicitó la participación en una encuesta a 99 cooperativas sociales cuyas misiones se investigaban. Sus destinatarios eran los directivos. Se

les envió una invitación por correo electrónico en junio de 2020 y una segunda al cabo de una semana. En total se recibieron 12 encuestas rellenas, totalizando el 12,12 % de las enviadas. Los resultados obtenidos por esta manera no podían ser tratados como representativos, sino que fueron analizados como casos especiales.

El ámbito importante del interés de los autores eran los valores declarados en las misiones identificadas de las cooperativas sociales. La aparición de los valores sociales en las misiones se basaba en la tipología de Whitman (2009), complementada por dos valores: dignidad y vida feliz (Seiler, Bortnowska 2020) y también una concentración en los beneficiarios (en total se tomaron en cuenta 35 valores sociales). Sin embargo, la lista de 21 valores económicos/ organizativos se definió un resultado del análisis de las siguientes publicaciones: Calori y Samin (1991), Marcoulides y Heck (1993), Cunningham et al. (2009), Helmig et al. (2015), van der Wal et al. (2008).

## Resultados

Analizando las palabras contenidas en las misiones de las cooperativas sociales se identificaron tres “campos semánticos” principales y unos más pequeños. El más grande de ellos se refería al ser humano (por ejemplo, en peligro de exclusión profesional, minusválido, niños) y lo que le ofrecían las organizaciones analizadas, por ejemplo, trabajo, educación, apoyo, activación y/o ayuda. El segundo “campo semántico” se centraba en los asuntos sociales, incluso en la cooperación social, cuyos objetivos fueron realizados por sus miembros, y al aumento de sus actividades o su reintegración social. Analizando el tercer “campo semántico” se puede observar un énfasis en el desarrollo de los servicios y productos entregados a los clientes, incluso en su alta calidad. En el cuarto, el término clave era empresa y en el quinto – creación de negocio y de puestos de trabajo y en el sexto – trabajo a favor del entorno local. El último “campo semántico” se refería a la educación de los niños y/o educación sanitaria.

Durante las investigaciones se hizo el análisis del contenido de las declaraciones de las misiones de las cooperativas sociales polacas. Se identificaron unos tipos de misiones que existen. El análisis mostró que una quinta parte (21,21%) tenía carácter estrictamente empresarial, dos veces más frecuente (43,43%) apareció un carácter social y casi la tercera parte (29,29%) se puede definir como una mezcla de las dos anteriores. Se separaron también las misiones, se concentraron en: 1. cliente, 2. empleado, 3. beneficiario.

El análisis del contenido de las misiones mostró que la mayoría de las cooperativas sociales investigadas (93,93%) presentaba en ellas sus valores (sociales y/o económicos/organizativos). Entre los valores sociales los más frecuentes eran: integración profesional (53,53%), integración social (38,38%), concentración en el beneficiario (37,37%), luego educación (26,26%), solidaridad (21,21%), belleza (13,13%), comunidad (13,13%). Entre los valores económicos solían aparecer: calidad (33,33%), atención al cliente (27,27%). Sin embargo, los demás eran mucho menos frecuentes. Por ejemplo, concentración en empleados (11,11%), profesionalismo (9,09%), implicación en el trabajo (9,09%), actividad de negocio (7,07%), beneficio (6,66%), investigación y desarrollo (6,06%).

Con el objetivo de verificar el material obtenido en las investigaciones, se realizaron entrevistas con directivos de las cooperativas analizadas. Se determinó que ellos habían identificado a las organizaciones que manejan más como una empresa (66,67%), que como una organización social (33,33%). La media de las calificaciones (escala 1-5) que los líderes encuestados atribuyeron a tres dimensiones de la identidad fueron: empresa - 4,67, organización social - 3,50, grupo de ayuda mutua - 2,42.

Durante las investigaciones también se analizó si las respuestas a cerca de qué valores eran los más importantes en sus cooperativas eran diferentes dependiendo de la identidad de la organización expresada por sus directivos (empresa / organización social). En las cooperativas de orientación empresarial aparecieron – según las declaraciones de su equipo administrativo- tanto valores económicos como sociales. No hubo ninguna en la que se promocionase solamente un tipo del valor. El valor económico más elegido fue la calidad de los productos/servicios. En cuanto al valor social, este fue integración social. Solamente en caso de una cooperativa de la identidad de la organización social, todos los valores elegidos fueron sociales.

## Limitaciones a la investigación

Las investigaciones realizadas tuvieron ciertas limitaciones : a) se analizaron solamente las declaraciones de las misiones (así pues, sólo uno de los elementos de la identidad organizativa) que aparecían en las páginas web de las cooperativas sociales, tal vez hubiese más, pero no aparecían expuestas, b) se tomó en cuenta solamente la expresión de la identidad expresada en las declaraciones de las misiones, y no la identidad sensu stricto, c) la investigación se refería solamente a un país y una forma legal de empresa social, d) se obtuvo un número relativamente bajo de devolución de los cuestionarios de encuestas, lo que limitó una posible generalización de las conclusiones.

## Conclusiones prácticas

Los análisis realizados mostraron la existencia de tres elementos principales en la identidad de las cooperativas sociales polacas. El primero, el más desarrollado tiene el carácter social y está relacionado con la orientación solidaria y la responsabilidad de la organización con respecto a la integración profesional y social de las personas en peligro de la exclusión social (actividades relacionadas con la actividad social y/o laboral). Las organizaciones comentadas prestan los servicios a sus miembros. Se concentran en el beneficiario y muchas veces declaran las actividades relacionadas con su servicio completo. Llevan, entre otras cosas, una actividad educativa y cultural. Con esta identidad está relacionada gran importancia de valores como la educación y belleza (relacionada con la actividad artística a favor del entorno). El segundo elemento importante de la identidad está vinculado con la actividad económica. Las organizaciones comentadas se ven como empresas que deberían entregar productos de alta calidad y concentrarse en la satisfacción del cliente. Con la identidad de la empresa están relacionados valores como la profesionalidad y la implicación en el trabajo que, en consecuencia, facilitan lograr el beneficio económico. También se nota un aspecto relacionado con una posición del

empleado en la organización- concentración en el empleado y seguridad de trabajo. Los asuntos menos importantes relacionados con el desarrollo de la empresa y la competencia fueron valores como la investigación y el desarrollo, los beneficios, la mejora del producto, la concentración en los competidores, el éxito de la empresa. El tercer aspecto menos importante en cuanto a la identidad de las cooperativas está relacionado con las actividades a favor de la comunidad y medio ambiente.

Una vez analizadas las declaraciones de las misiones se puede constatar que las cooperativas sociales polacas, en general, se presentan como organizaciones que son responsables de una integración profesional y social, pero al mismo tiempo son empresas para las que son esenciales una calidad en los productos y la satisfacción de los clientes.

Un análisis más detallado permitió distinguir cuatro tipos principales de identidades de las cooperativas según como están enfatizados sus elementos particulares:

- Organizaciones concentradas en el trabajo e integración social,
- Organizaciones orientadas al trabajo e integración social con énfasis en la actividad a favor del entorno social,
- Empresas concentradas solamente en la actividad mercantil.
- Empresas con Responsabilidad Social de Negocio (que dan prioridad de la actividad mercantil con énfasis en la responsabilidad social del negocio en el campo del medio ambiente y entorno de trabajo).

El estudio de las encuestas que complementaron el análisis de las misiones confirmaron que las cooperativas sociales polacas tienen identidades variadas. Estas van desde las estrictamente empresariales, pasando por las que unen la integración social y actividad empresarial y acabando por las estrictamente orientadas al entorno social.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** declaraciones de misión, cooperativas sociales, valores, identidad organizativa.

# 1. Introduction

According to the latest available data from May 2018, there are 1,517 registered social cooperatives in Poland<sup>1 2</sup>. The legal concept of social cooperative was first introduced in Poland by the Act of 2006 (Journal of Laws of 2006 No. 94, item 651), which stipulates that a social cooperative should favor the social and work integration of its members and employees. It may also conduct social, cultural and educational activity, or more broadly, socially useful activity in the area of public tasks, in accordance with the 2003 Act on Public Benefit and Volunteer Work. By establishing social cooperatives, legislation in Poland subscribed to the process of institutionalizing a new type of cooperatives oriented towards work integration. This process was first initiated in Italy in 1991 and went on to be adopted, among others, in Portugal - 1996, Spain - 1999, Greece - 1999, and France - 2001 (Thomas, 2004; Kerlin, 2006; Defourny, Nyssens, 2012). The National Program for the Development of the Social Economy, adopted in Poland in 2019, assumes that - alongside social enterprises, cooperatives for the disabled and the blind, supported employment establishments and reintegration units - social cooperatives form part of Poland's solidarity economy, which in turn is part of the social economy co-created additionally by non-governmental organizations, church organizations, labor cooperatives, nonprofit companies, and rural housewives' groups.

The rise of social cooperatives can be related to the blurring of boundaries between sectors in the modern economy. The traditional division into public, commercial and nonprofit is being increasingly challenged as insufficient to reflect the reality of contemporary organizations (Knutsen, 2016; Defourny, Nyssens, 2017). On one hand, nonprofit organizations seeking additional income commercialize and embrace profit-oriented activities (Dees, 1998; Skloot, 1987; Salamon, 1993; Tuckman, 1998; Eikenberry, Kluver 2004), the phenomenon of social innovation is gaining popularity (Philis et al. al., 2008; Mulgan et al., 2007), and new legal forms of organizations combining social and economic goals (including social cooperatives) keep cropping up (Defourny, Nyssens, 2012; Defourny, Nyssens, 2017). On the other hand, enterprises develop social responsibility programs, adopting a civic orientation that makes them cautious about the impact of their activity on the social and natural environment (Carroll, 1991; Carroll, Shabana, 2010), while new forms of cooperation between commercial and nonprofit organizations are being developed, e.g. joint venture, cause-related marketing (Berger et al., 2006; Seitanidi, Crane, 2009).

The ongoing changes mean that some organizations are perceived as hybrids that operate in various organizational fields, combine business and social logic, relate to markets and civil society, and have both commercial and non-commercial features at the same time (Cooney, 2006; Battilana, Lee, 2014 ; Litrico, Besharov, 2019; Bull, Ridley-Duff, 2019). An example of hybrid organizations is social cooperatives. Despite the defined legal form, they can still ex-

1. <http://www.spoldzielniesocjalne.org/>

2. *Many of them were inactive. According to the 2017 data of the Central Statistical Office of Poland, 900 out of 1,400 social cooperatives at the time were actually active (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2018).*

press their organizational identity in a variety of ways - adopt a more social or a more market orientation (Young, 2001a, 2001b; Moss et al., 2011; Jager, Schroer, 2014). This expression can be contained in their mission statement, which is an important element of their organizational identity (Leuthesser, Kohli, 1997; Moss et al., 2011; Cunningham et al., 2009). Mission statement is a form of communication with stakeholders and an attempt to briefly explain to the environment what the organization stands for (Hirota et al., 2010). Mission-statement analysis may be one of the ways to determine what social cooperatives are, define their priorities, policies, etc. (Lewis et al., 2021). Due to the fact that mission statements should inform about the organization's most important values (Campbell, Yeung, 1991), it can be used in equal measure to describe its axiological system.

During the analysis of the content of the Google Scholar and EBSCO databases (covering the years 1980-2019<sup>3</sup>), only a few publications were identified that included in the titles key terms related to the subject of the research such as: mission (statement/s) & social enterprise (GS: 21; E: 2) or mission (statement/s) & hybrid organization (GS: 3; E: 4). No article was found containing the phrases mission (statement/s) & social cooperative in the title. Let us also note that in the Google Scholar database 7 items were identified containing the following expressions in the title: organis(/z)ational identity & social enterprise and 5 - organis(/z)ational identity & hybrid (for comparison, in the EBSCO database it was respectively 2 and 5).

For example, Del Gesso (2020) analysed the social enterprises legal models of the following countries: Italy, France, Finland, Lithuania, Belgium as well as the UK. In her view, SE has its own entrepreneurial identity, arguing that it has unique features which are independent from the organizational forms it can take. The following factors were taken into account in that study: the peculiar mission of SE ('mission'); the nature of its business activity ('activity'); the related peculiarities of the management and governance systems ('governance'); the consequent impacts of activity ('performance'); and the responsibilities for reporting outcomes ('accountability'). SE has also a social identification which is relative to the role that it plays in the society as a whole. Del Gesso (2020, p. 28) indicates, amongst others, that the mission of SE 'is driven by non-profitable goals, where the generation of value outcomes for society are envisioned'.

Identification and analysis of the basic identity characteristics of European social enterprises was performed by Monzón-Campos and Herrero-Montagud (2016). They also highlighted the need to identify different typologies or profiles of social enterprises in different countries. Only in this way, they believe, it will be possible to prepare precise statistics on social enterprises and to propose policy actions aimed at improving the use of the wealth and diversity of these entities. Such studies (in particular the analysis of the identity of the social enterprises) have been carried out among others in Spain - by Solórzano et al. (2018). Our research also responds to a need indicated by Monzón-Campos and Herrero-Montagud (2016).

Let us add that the analysis of available literature showed that, a qualitative analysis of the missions of British social enterprises was conducted by Lewis et al. (2021), among others. It

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3. The analysis was carried out just prior to authors' own studies. In the course of the research, the articles which were published in the following years (2020-2021) were also analysed.



enabled conclusions to be drawn on two key themes: vocabulary clusters and the contextualization of meaning; as well as the presence of rhetoric in terms of communication and strategy. The analysis of the missions of American arts and culture social enterprises was conducted by Pandey et al (2015). It is important to underline that no research on the mission statements of Polish social cooperatives has been identified. The studies of the authors of this article were carried out to fill that research gap.

It is interesting to emphasize that Poland is an example of a country which experienced rapid change after 1989. After the collapse of the so-called 'real socialism' system, systemic changes aimed at introducing market economy led, among others, to the breakdown of the traditional cooperative system. At the same time the transformation was aimed at restitution of civil society and the third sector, including organizations responsible for social security.

The aim of the article is to: a) identify the types of mission statements in Polish social cooperatives; b) identify the values contained in the mission statements of Polish social cooperatives; c) determine whether the identity of an enterprise, social organization or mutual-support group prevails in Polish social cooperatives.

The article is divided into sections, which are: introduction, literature review, methods, results and conclusions.

## 2. Social cooperatives as hybrids

The area of social activity is determined by state, market and household borders. It can be described as consisting of centers and of peripheries (Hudson, 1999; cf. van Til, 2000). It is not homogeneous, and its boundaries are becoming increasingly blurrier (Billis, 1993; van Til, 2000; Kramer, 2000; Knutsen, 2016). In this context, it might be worth referring to P. Hall (1992), for whom the so-called third sector was an artifactic construct, not an institutional reality. Heterogeneity is characteristic not only of the social sector as a whole, but also of the organizations that constitute it. They often have features typical of entities representing various sectors. As a result, they are hybrids and their only property is differentiation (Abzug, 1999; cf. Cooney, 2006; Smith et al., 2013; Pache, Santos, 2013; Jager, Schroer, 2014; Battilana, Lee, 2014; Knutsen, 2016; Bull, Ridley-Duff, 2019; Davies, Doherty, 2019; Litrico, Besharov, 2019).

There are two versions of the approach to the social sector as devoid of 'distinctive identity'. In the first one, the sector in question is considered to be a conglomerate by nature. It is noted that the intersectoral boundaries have always been blurred and isolating the third sector is a sort of reification. This approach is reflected by Evers and Laville (2004) in their concept of welfare mix. In the second case, the flows between sectors and hybridization of contemporary organizations are indicated, pointing to an approach that is dynamic. Transgression is *signum temporis* (Knutsen, 2016; Defourny, Nyssens, 2017; Litrico, Besharov, 2019). In this context, several important sub-processes can be identified: (a) the development of various forms of outsourcing, contracting public services (Lipsky, Smith, 1989-90; Kramer, 1994; Salamon, 1995; Marwell, 2004) (b) commercialization, marketization of traditional nonprofit organi-

zations (Skloot, 1987; Salamon, 1993; Tuckman, 1998; Weisbrod, 1998; Goddeeris, Weisbrod 1998; Eikenberry, Kluver 2004), (c) professionalization of nonprofit entities, their structural, process and personal resemblance to enterprises and public organizations through embracing modern management techniques and employing paid staff (Cumming, 2008; Hwang, Powell, 2009; Sanzo-Perez et al., 2017), (d) development of social innovation (Philis et al., 2008; Mulgan et al., 2007), (e) application of risk-capital methods to achieve social goals and making forays into venture philanthropy (Young, 2007; Jenkins, 2011), (f) implementation of corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs by enterprises, their active civic commitment and pursuit of activities related to ethical and philanthropic responsibility (Carroll, 1991; Pinkston, Carroll, 1996; Carroll, Shabana, 2010), building corporate ethical identity (Fukukawa et al. 2007; Berrone et al., 2007), (g) development of various forms of cooperation between nonprofit organizations and enterprises: joint ventures, cause-related marketing, social alliances (Berger et al., 2006; Seitanidi, Crane, 2009; Sanzo-Perez et al., 2017; Maucuer, Renaud, 2019), (h) creation of various indirect organizational forms, e.g. corporate foundations, which are the example of a BONGO (Business Organized Non-Governmental Organization), (i) introducing new legal forms of social enterprises into the legislation, e.g. social cooperatives (Thomas, 2004; Kerlin, 2006; Defourny, Nyssens, 2012).

Social enterprises have seen a rapid growth since the 1980s (Kerlin, 2006). Some researchers recognize them as a new generation of nonprofit organizations driven by the spirit of entrepreneurship and integrating solidarity with market orientation. The literature points to the complexity of the world of social enterprises (Thompson, Doherty, 2006), one example being by using the zoo metaphor to describe it (Young, Lecy, 2013). The differences between the United States and EU countries are also emphasized (Evers, Laville, 2004; Kerlin, 2006; Defourny, Nyssens, 2012; Young, Lecy, 2013). In the case of the United States, social enterprises follow a continuum, moving from commercial enterprises pursuing goals of social responsibility or corporate philanthropy, through various types of mixed forms, to nonprofit organizations selling goods and services (Kerlin, 2006; cf. Dees, 1998; Marwell, McInerney 2005). Social enterprises established by nonprofit entities are seen as part of the market economy (Kerlin, 2006). Their ability to generate profit is emphasized with the simultaneous non-distribution constraint. In Europe, social enterprises include cooperatives, mutual-aid societies, that is organizations which can distribute profits. Emphasis is placed on the democratic principles of management and participation, where such entities are viewed as a separate social economy (Kerlin, 2006). A definition developed by the EMES (the Emergence of Social Enterprise in Europe) research team is often applied here, among others. Social enterprises include initiatives that meet both economic and social criteria. These features are assigned to four legal forms of organizations: cooperatives, mutual societies, associations, and foundations (CMAF).

In the respective legislative systems of EU countries, separate legal forms - social cooperatives - were introduced to support social entrepreneurship: in Italy - 1991, Portugal - 1996 and 1998, Spain - 1999, France - 2001, Greece - 1999 and 2011. In Poland, the legal concept of social cooperative was introduced in 2006. It is now part of the country's social economy, which also includes, among other entities: cooperatives for the disabled and the blind,

supported employment establishments, reintegration units, non-governmental organizations, church organizations, labor cooperatives, nonprofit companies, rural housewives' groups. The Polish legislator has assigned functions to social cooperatives for the social and work integration of people at risk of social exclusion, also foreseeing the possibility of them conducting business activity for the benefit of the broader local community. Social cooperatives' founders may be natural persons, but also non-governmental organizations, church legal persons or local governments. The scope of social cooperatives' activity is the running of a joint venture by its members and employees. However, their balance sheet surplus may not be distributed, although the activity may derive funds from state budget or local government in the form of: grants, loans, sureties, services or financial, accounting, economic, legal and marketing consulting.

Social cooperatives are an example of work integration social enterprises (WISE). They can be classified as laboratory companies (Bellostas et al., 2016). In their case, the social mission implementation depends on the ability to operate in a competitive market. Social cooperatives can be treated broadly as hybrid organizations that are outcomes of ethical and entrepreneurial intentions (Bull, Ridley-Duff, 2019), operate in various organizational fields (Cooney, 2006), are a combination of multiple institutional logics (Battilana, Lee, 2014), deliver multiple forms of value (Bellostas et al., 2016; Mair, Marti, 2006), may be characterized by differentiated identities (Moss et al. 2011; Jager, Schroer, 2014; Knutsen, 2016)<sup>4</sup>.

Hybrids are related both markets and civil society and they combine commercial and social logics. They are associated with different goals, structures, values, norms and identities. This creates tensions of various kinds, including those that Smith and Lewis (2011; cf. Smith et al., 2013) categorize as belonging tensions which involve questions of identity: who are we? What do we do? Within heterogeneous organizations such as hybrids, there is also a high probability of collision between goals (performing), processes, structures (organizing) and identities (belonging) (Smith, Lewis, 2011). Studies on hybrid organizations often ask what exactly determines the classification of an organization – its legal form or its identity. Organizational identity approach conceptualizes a hybrid organization according to the perception of selected 'audiences', which has prompted many authors to point out the usefulness of this concept in research on hybrids (Young, 2001a, 2001b; Moss et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2013; Jager, Schroer, 2014; Lloyd, Woodside, 2015; Knutsen, 2016; Del Gesso, 2020).

4. *There is also a narrower approach to hybrids as one of the types of social enterprises (Young, 2001a; Young, Lecy, 2013; Defourmy, Nyssens, 2017).*

### 3. Mission statement as an expression of organizational identity

In organizational terms, the concept of identity appears in two main theoretical constructs: corporate identity (CI) and organizational identity (OI). Of the two, corporate identity is the one that goes back earlier, all the way to the tradition of the company's graphic design, logos and interior office design. As such, it is a concept of presenting the organization's specificity to a wider audience, rooted in the desire to evoke such an expression of the organization that would increase trust and commitment in customers and employees (Pilditch, 1970; Carter, 1982). According to Olins (1978, 1995), CI showcases the organization's personality with the use of communication tools, especially visual symbols: name, logo, advertising slogans. Melewar and Karaosmanoglu (2006) frames it as showcasing the organization to stakeholders. Contemporary organizations strive to consciously communicate their identity to the public and in this way shape their image within the environment. Balmer and Greyser (2002; see: Balmer, Soenen, 1999) distinguish five types of identity: actual identity, including the attributes of the organization such as management and employee values; communicated identity, taking into account information communicated to stakeholders, both in a controlled and uncontrolled manner; conceived identity, relating to perceptions of the organization - image and reputation; ideal identity, or the optimum positioning of the organization in its market in a given time frame; desired identity, which is how the organization is envisaged by its leaders.

CI is associated with an image-related, marketing approach to the organization. Chronologically, CI precedes the theoretical construct of OI. It derives from research on organizational behavior and aims to understand how employees perceive and how they collectively develop an understanding of the organization that they create. It has clear links with the psychological and sociological understanding of identity. Research on OI departs from the assumption that identity is a relational construct formed in interaction with others (Hatch, Schultz, 2002; Ashforth, Mael, 1989), which refers to how members perceive, feel, and think about their organization (Hatch, Schultz 1997). In this case, the key question is 'who are we as an organization?' According to Albert and Whetten (1985; cf. Gioia et al., 2013), OI is formulated around central, enduring and distinctive elements. Dutton et al. (1994) distinguished, for the needs of their membership identification model: perceived organizational identity and construed external image. Perceived identity concerns the features of an organization that its members consider as base, distinctive, and permanent. Construed image, on the other hand, is a recreation by members of how the main attributes of the organization are perceived on the outside. In this case, a parallel can be made to social psychology while the latter type of identity can be called the organization's 'looking-glass self' (Cooley, 1922). The identity and image of an organization are therefore interrelated (Hatch, Schultz, 1997; 2002). Internal and external definitions of organizational identity interact with each other in the course of four processes (Hatch, Schultz, 2002): mirroring (identity is mirrored in the images of others), reflecting (identity is

embedded in cultural understandings), expressing (culture makes itself known through identity claims), impressing (expressions of identity leave impressions on others).

One of the ways to express organizational identity is through mission statement (Leuthesser, Kohli, 1997; Stuart, 1999; Gray, Balmer 1998; Young, 2001b; Cunningham et al., 2009; Moss et al., 2011; Hirota et al. 2010; Scherer, 2017; Gauthier, Josien, 2017). Mission statement is a dynamic and interpretative concept, hence the very process of its formation is an opportunity to also define collective identity (Berlan, 2018). Research on mission-based organizational identity has so far been carried out, among others, by Cunningham et al. (2009) and Moss et al. (2011).

Mission statement is an enduring document of purpose that distinguishes an entity from other similar ones (Pearce, 1982; cf. Lin et al. 2018; Kemp, Dwyer 2003; Wheelen, Hunger, 2010; Vogt, 1994). It is a declaration of the organization's *raison d'être* (Drucker, 1974; cf. Campbell, Yeung, 1991; Pearce, David, 1987; Viljoen 1994; Vogt 1994). Many researchers state that it defines the company's business model and hints at future goals (Bartkus et al., 2000; cf. Campbell, 1997; Davies, Glaister, 1997; Wang, Lin 2011). Bartkus et al. (2006) conclude that mission statements can be reactive (describe what the organization is doing now) or proactive (contain forward-looking statements).

Several authors indicate different components of mission statements, e.g. customers, products/services, markets, technology, philosophy, commitment to stakeholders, core values, desired public image etc. (cf. Ackoff, 1986; Bart, Tabone, 1999; Campbell, 1989; David, 2005; Jovanov Marjanova, Sofijanov, 2014; Pearce, David, 1987; Piercy, Morgan, 1994; Rarick, Vitton, 1995; Want, 1986). Various constellations of these components were presented in Table 1.

For years, theorists and practitioners of management have stressed the importance of clearly defined mission statements (e.g. Bailey, 1996; Braun et al. 2012; Desmidt et al., 2011; Drucker, 1974; Ireland, Hitt, 1992; Kemp, Dwyer, 2003). Although some studies suggest that the relationship between mission statements and organizational performance is quite weak (Desmidt et al., 2011; cf. Atrill et al., 2005; Bartkus et al., 2006; David, 1989; Palmer, Short, 2008), other show that a mission statement can be used for many internal (cf. Drucker, 1977; Brown, Yoshioka, 2003; Ireland, Hitt, 1992; Klemm et al., 1991) as well as external purposes (cf. Campbell, 1997; Leuthesser, Kohli, 1997; Bartkus et al., 2000). According to Bartkus et al. (2000; cf. Campbell, Yeung 1991; Lin, 2012; Kemp, Dwyer, 2003; King, Cleland, 1979), mission statements: facilitate coherence within the organization by providing direction and purpose; serve as a control mechanism; assist organization members in making non-routine decisions by expressing the company's values; give a meaning to work that inspires and motivates employees. Some researchers state that it is the crucial factor of formulating, implementing and evaluating organizational strategy (cf. Analoui, Karami, 2002; Certo, Certo, 2012; Kemp, Dwyer, 2003; Pearce, David, 1987). Others stress the importance of mission statements for internal and external communication purposes. They explain that it can be a useful communication tool of company and its inside and outside stakeholders (such as employees, customers, investors, suppliers, local communities, the public, or the media, etc.) to influence their perceptions (cf. Bartkus et al., 2004; Campbell, 1997; Law, Breznik, 2018; Lin et al., 2018; Lin, Ryan, 2016; Kemp, Dwyer, 2003).

**Table 1.** Components of mission statements

Authors	Components of mission statements
Ackoff (1986)	goals, differentiation factors, organizational aspirations, role of all the stakeholders
Bart, Tabone (1999)	distinctive competency, target market, products/services, unique identity, desired public image, concern for satisfying customers, and concern for employees are associated with managerial satisfaction with firm financial performance
Campbell (1989, p. 4)	purpose ('why the company exists'), strategy ('the company's strategy for achieving its purpose'), values ('what the company believes in'), standards and behaviors ('the policies and behaviour patterns to guide the company operates')
David (2005)	customers, products or services, markets, technology, concern for survival, growth, and profitability, philosophy, self-concept, concern for public image, and concern for employees
Jovanov Marjanova, Sofijanov (2014)	explanation of the purpose of the organization, identification of standards for allocation of resources, focus and specification of organizational purposes into objectives and goals, identification of core strategic competence and market position, setting priorities, values and business philosophy, etc.
Pearce, David (1987)	the specification of target customers and markets, the identification of principal products / services, the specification of geographic domain, the identification of core technologies, the expression of commitment to survival, growth, and profitability, the specification of key elements in the company philosophy, the identification of the company self-concept, the identification of the firm's desired public image
Piercy, Morgan (1994)	the central purpose or philosophy of the organization, business definition of the product-market domain where the organization is to operate, core values or 'what do we want people in this organization to be good at?' question, critical success factors or a question of 'what do we have to be good at to succeed in this market or industry?'
Rarick, Vitton (1995)	the company identity or self-concept, company philosophy, principal products or services produced, customers and related target markets, commitment to employees, obligation to stockholders, and geographic focus
Want (1986)	purpose, business aims, corporate identity, company policies, values

**Source:** own study.

Mission statement prioritizes values that are important to the organization (Helmig et al., 2015). In the case of hybrid organizations, three distinct major drivers of interest can be distinguished: mutual, general, and capital (Defourny, Nyssens, 2017). In social cooperatives, mutual interest is related to the values of social and work integration. Social cooperatives can also work for the benefit of general interest. In this case, they are close allies of social values that are implemented for the sake of a larger community: environment, freedom, health, human rights, responsibility, solidarity, sustainability, etc. (Whitman, 2009)<sup>5</sup>. Social cooperatives are,

*5. Deciding whether the implementation of certain values is related to the common or public interest depends on the context, therefore the division into social values in a broad sense and economic values was applied in the research.*

as already mentioned, an example of laboratory companies, which is why they must be able to survive in a competitive market and pursue capital interest. In commercial enterprises, the most important values are profitability, reliability, accountability, expertise, effectiveness, efficiency, innovation (van der Wal et al., 2008). Capital interest can be linked to economic values. According to Calori and Sarnin (1991), they are oriented to the company's performance and include: competition on the market, growth, profitability, quality, adaptation, rigour in management, professional integrity, will to be number one. Marcoulides and Heck (1993) distinguish: risk, safety (the emphasis that the organization places on protecting its employees in the workplace), efficiency, professionalism, market and image, research and development. Let us note that these authors researched commercial enterprises. Helmig et al. (2015) distinguished economic values in the nonprofit sector, among which the most notable are: competition, efficiency, growth, profit maximization. In what concerns social cooperatives, mutual and general interest - along the associated values - are part of their normative identity, while capital interest and economic values are part of their utilitarian identity (see: Moss et al., 2011).

## 4. Methods

The empirical research was carried out in the first quarter of 2020. Before research questions and goals were determined, an analysis of the literature was carried out. Subsequently, the content of the missions of social cooperatives registered in Poland was identified and analysed. This was achieved by: defining the coding scheme, testing it, purifying and/or detailing it, collecting, coding and analysing the data. Based on this analysis, conclusions were formulated, recognizing their limitations and indicating potential future directions. An online survey was then conducted. Some of the questions included in the prepared research tool were used to triangulate the results obtained at an earlier stage, while some related to the organizational identity of social cooperatives as perceived by managers.

Two databases were used to identify social cooperatives. The first one - the National Catalog of Social Cooperatives<sup>6</sup> - contained a condensed description of the activities of 1,517 discussed organizations. The second database - published on non-governmental organizations' portal<sup>7</sup>, included among others a list of 1,565 records which were identified as active social cooperatives (dismissing those that were in liquidation, have filed for bankruptcy or ceased to operate). It should be mentioned that social cooperatives may (but do not have to) include in these databases information on the functioning of their entities, including: contact details (e.g. website addresses, Facebook), registration data, missions and/or objectives. Users have the option of filtering records, e.g. by province or area of activity.

Having the names of social cooperatives, their website addresses and Facebook pages were searched for (using the information contained in catalogues, in addition to the Google search

6. <http://www.spoldzielniesocjalne.org/index.htm>

7. <https://spis.ngo.pl/>

engine). Missions statements of these entities were identified on the websites, sometimes – when possible - using to this end the ‘Search ...’ tool, whereas for Facebook pages, the text in the ‘Information’ tab was analysed. When finalizing the search, the completeness of the data was additionally verified by browsing all websites that were displayed after entering the phrases ‘mission’ and ‘social cooperative’ in the search bar.

Consequently, a total of 99 missions of social cooperatives operating in Poland were identified. They were analysed not only in terms of word count or prevalence of key terms, but also - using the IRAMUTEQ software - the connections existing between them. The context in which they were used was taken into account as well. The collected data was quantified, which allowed for its further statistical analysis. Ultimately, both qualitative and quantitative approaches were combined in the content analysis.

An important area of interest in the study concerned values declared in the identified mission statements of social cooperatives. When examining the prevalence of social values in the missions, the typology of Whitman (2009) was used, supplemented with two values: dignity and happy and joyful life (Seiler, Bortnowska, 2020), as well as ‘focus on beneficiaries’ (in total, 35 social values were included in the research). In turn, the list of 21 economic/organizational values was developed based on the analysis of the publications by: Calori and Sarnin (1991), Marcoulides and Heck (1993), Cunningham et al. (2009), Helmig et al. (2015), van der Wal et al. (2008).

At a later stage, an invitation to participate in the survey was sent out to the 99 social cooperatives whose missions were being researched. The invite was addressed to the managers of those entities. The questionnaire was prepared in electronic form, using the Google Form software. It consisted of 4 semi-closed questions (1 of them was used to triangulate the results on the value of the analysed entities, while the remaining 3 were related to the identity of social cooperatives), and demographics. The invitation was sent out electronically in June 2020 and it was renewed after a week in case of no response. A total of 12 completed questionnaires were obtained, which indicates a return rate of 12.12%.

Among the cooperatives participating in the study, the most numerous were those operating in the following areas: catering (41.67%), tourism and leisure (25.00%), production and industry (25.00%), health and beauty (16, 67%), construction (16.67%). The majority of companies employed from 5 to 10 people (58.33%).

The research that was carried out had certain limitations: a) only the mission statements (and thus only one element of organizational identity) published on social cooperatives’ websites were analysed, possibly omitting the ones that existed but were not placed online, b) only the expression of the identity as expressed in the mission statements was taken into account, not the identity in the strict sense, c) the study concerned one country and one legal form of the social enterprise, d) a relatively low return rate of survey questionnaires was obtained, which limited the generalizability of the conclusions.

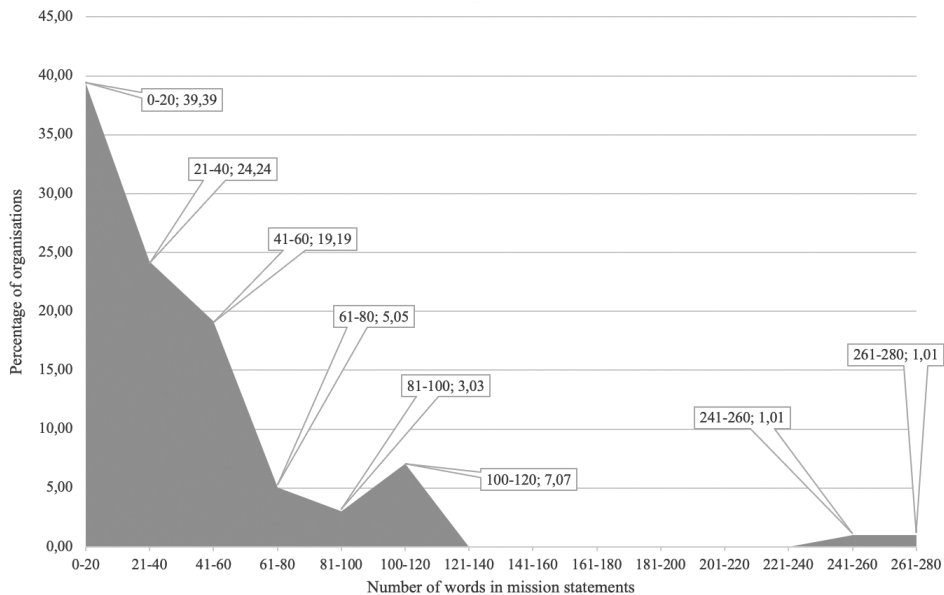


## 5. Mission statements of Polish social cooperatives – content analysis

The missions of the surveyed social cooperatives differed in terms of word count. The shortest mission statements (three) consisted of just 2 words, while the two longest ones had a word count of 250 and 265, respectively. The highest number of missions did not cross the 20-word threshold (39.39%) (Figure 1). The arithmetic mean stood at 40.95, the median – at 30, and the mode - at 8. The dispersion of the data was very strong (the coefficient of variation was 107.92%).

Subsequently, the content of the mission statements of social cooperatives was analysed. In the initial stage, the most common words and connections between them were established (Figure 2). The research shows that cooperatives focused in their missions on people (the term in singular or plural appeared 119 times) and activities related to their social and/or work activity. Other recurring terms were: customer (20 times), services (33) and/or products (9) which were offered, or the quality (20) of market offer.

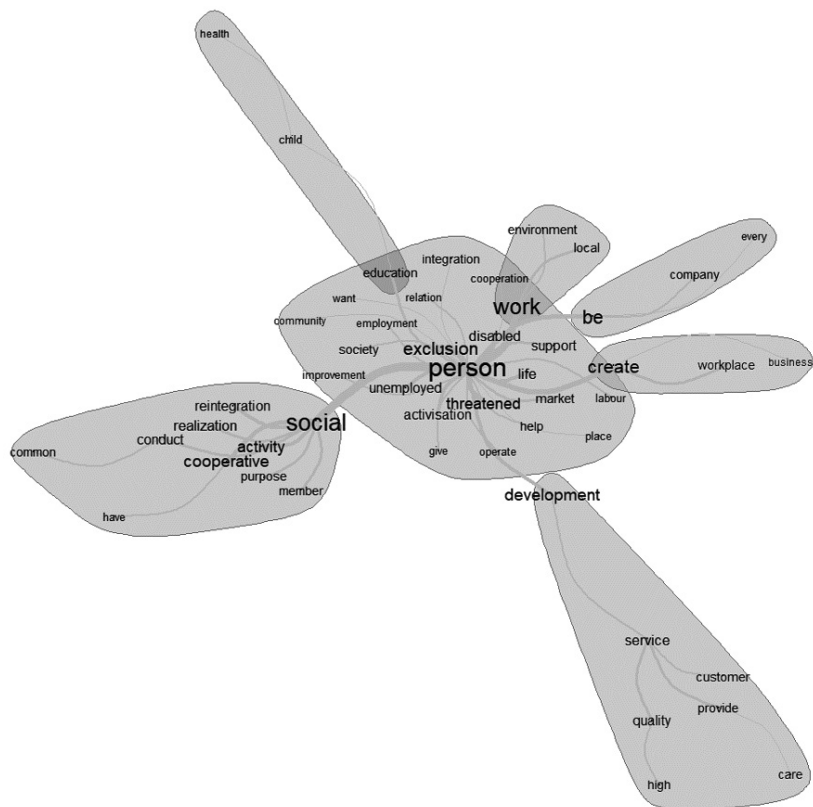
**Figure 1.** Word count in the mission statements of Polish social cooperatives



**Source:** own study.

By analysing the terms included in the mission statements of social cooperatives, three main 'islands of words' and several smaller ones were identified. The largest one (the main one) concerned the person (e.g. at risk of professional exclusion, the disabled people, children) and what the analysed organizations can offer them, e.g. work, education, support, activation and/or help. The second 'island' focused on social issues, including social cooperative whose purposes were pursued by its members, as well as on strengthening their activity or their social reintegration. When analysing the third 'island', an emphasis on the development of services and products provided to customers, including their high quality, was found. In the fourth, the key term was company, in the fifth - creating business and workplaces, and in the sixth - work for the local environment. The last (seventh) 'word island' concerned children's formal or health education.

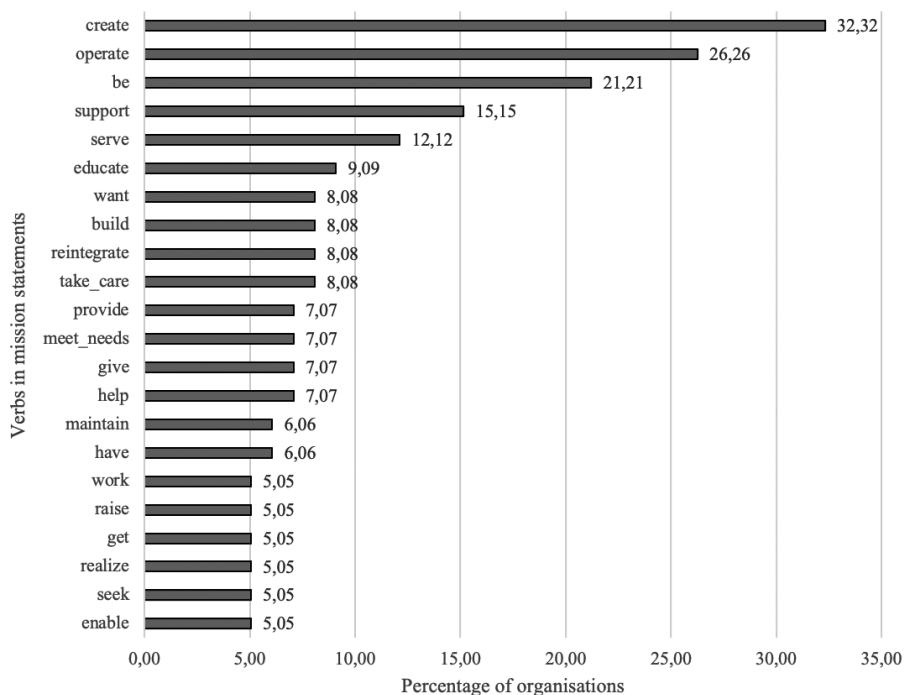
**Figure 2.** Linkages between the most common words found in the mission statements of Polish social cooperatives



Source: own study

In the course of the research, the prevalence of verbs informing about actions/activities declared by the surveyed organizations in their mission statements was also analysed (Figure 3). According to those statements, every third social cooperative (32.32%) was involved in creating; mainly creating jobs, but also: interpersonal or business relationships, team, community, socially responsible enterprise, the reality to live in. Every fourth mission (26.26%) communicated areas (fields) in which individual social cooperatives operate. These were, among others, economic activity, building social capital or a spirit of cooperation, activities for the benefit of socially excluded persons and their families, social and/or work reintegration. They also informed about who they are (be; 21.21%) or what characterizes them, e.g. 'We are a social enterprise that creates jobs for persons with disabilities', 'We are a place of positive initiatives, a space for growth education and experience', 'We are valued experts', 'We are open to the implementation of unusual challenges', 'We are jointly responsible for our clients' business'. Almost every seventh (15.15%) cooperative supported someone (e.g. the unemployed, the homeless, children, youth, customers), while every eighth informed about the services it provides (e.g. customer service, training, construction, catering, cleaning).

**Figure 3.** The number of verbs most frequently used in the mission statements of Polish social cooperatives



Source: own study.

The research also included a qualitative analysis of the content of the mission statements of Polish social cooperatives. The types of missions in those entities were identified. The analysis showed that every fifth of them (21.21%) was strictly business-oriented, i.e. that it focused solely on the economic aspect of the organization's activities. An example of a mission formulated in this way is: 'We build your success thanks to our comprehensive Call Center solutions. We are co-responsible for the business of our clients, we support the development and implementation of your business goals. [...] We approach and carry out each project on an individual basis, making sure it is tailored to the needs of both the client and the end recipient'.

Over one third of the surveyed missions (43.43%) can be classified as strictly social, focused solely on aid-related matters. In this category, we can distinguish those in which only goals related to social (39.39%) and/or professional (53.53%) integration were formulated. However, there is a group of mission statements that strongly emphasize responsibility in terms of social and work integration, but also stress the importance of acting towards the wider social environment. The mission statements formulated in this way emanate the ideas of CSR, yet this is done from the perspective of a socially-focused organization. Examples include:

- 'The Social Cooperative is a socially responsible enterprise which effectively employs persons with disabilities [...] What sets us apart is our fully socially responsible approach to addressing the problems of exclusion, especially among people with disabilities, using to this end creative and innovative methods of running a social enterprise and skillful diversity management [...] We also draw from the concepts of CSR and CSV, collaborating with the private sector to seek effective solutions to improve the conditions and quality of life of social communities'.
- 'Promoting the idea of sustainable development, social economy and social entrepreneurship, promoting diversity at work as well as equal opportunities and equal rights of women and men, promoting the sense of European identity, promoting the values of civil society and active European citizenship, encouraging cooperation between societies'.

Slightly less than one third of the surveyed mission statements (29.29%) can be described as mixed, in which both business and social goals can be found. In some cases, this took the form of a business mission retaining the standards of corporate social responsibility. Examples include:

- 'We create professional business relationships with our clients. We provide services in accordance with our policy, professed values and ethical standards, all this without compromising on quality standards'.
- 'Food production based on high-quality ingredients sourced from local, trusted suppliers. Caring for the natural environment through the use of biodegradable packaging and reusable porcelain tableware. Ensuring the highest standards of food health safety'.

The analysed mission statements can also be typologized according to whether they focus on the customer, the employee, or perhaps the beneficiary. Customer-oriented missions fare often business missions where customer satisfaction is prioritized and ensured by provid-

ing high-quality services and products. Missions of this type accounted for over a quarter (27.27%) of the sample. Examples include:

- 'Providing high-quality customer service and delivering unique home-cooking products to the market';
- 'Satisfaction of customers with our services';
- 'Customer and their satisfaction are our top priority, as they allow us to approach our services with diligence and passion, so that they are at the highest level';
- 'There is nothing that we value more than the satisfaction of our customers, both institutional and private.

Every tenth mission statement (11.11%) could be described as one that focuses on employees - they highlight the essence of good working conditions, both financially and socially. Examples include:

- 'Working for a Social Cooperative (...) means simple, reliable and fixed conditions of employment, remuneration and bonuses for employees';
- 'We want to tap into the potential of [our employees], provide them with opportunities to grow, and create a social enterprise propelled by a strong and committed team';
- 'We want to be a dream place of work for exceptional people that will enable them to pursue and develop their passions'.

Over a third (38.38%) of the missions can be described as being beneficiary-centered. Those who fall within the scope of social and work integration are not perceived merely as employees, but also customers (beneficiaries) to whom a comprehensive service should be provided, including services for their families, immediate environment, etc. In other words, a holistic approach to the beneficiary is stressed, focusing on his or her various needs, not only those related to work. Examples include:

- 'Comprehensive support for those at risk of exclusion ...';
- 'Comprehensive support for the mentally ill, their social reintegration, professional activation and broadly understood de-stigmatization in social consciousness'.

## 6. Values in the mission statements of Polish social cooperatives – content analysis

Having analysed the content of the mission statements, it was found that the vast majority of social cooperatives (93.93%) shared in them their values (social and/or economic/organizational). In most of the mission statements, two values were mentioned (18.18%), followed by: three (16.16%), one (13.13%), five (11.11%), four (10.10%). Only in one case there were as many as 15 values mentioned. The dispersion of the data was very strong ( $V = 70.61\%$ ) (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Values in mission statements of Polish social cooperatives – basic statistics

Number of social cooperatives presenting values in mission statements N	Min	Max	Arithmetic mean $\bar{x}$	Median Me	Mode Mo	Standard deviation SD	Coefficient of variation V [%]
93	0	15	3,8687	3	2	2,7317	70,61

Source: own study.

The research showed that the majority (79.79%) of the social cooperatives emphasized social values in their mission statements. In 12 cases, they appeared independently, meaning unaccompanied by economic values. One (18.18%), two (15.15%) or three (14.14%) such values were most frequently indicated. The dispersion of the data was very strong ( $V = 88.61\%$ ) (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Social values in mission statements of Polish social cooperatives – basic statistics

Number of social cooperatives presenting social values in mission statements N	Min	Max	Arithmetic mean $\bar{x}$	Median Me	Mode Mo	Standard deviation SD	Coefficient of variation V [%]
79	0	12	2,7172	2	0	2,4076	88,61

Source: own study.

It was found that the analysed mission statements referred to - with varying frequency - a total of 22 social values. The most common were: work integration (53.53%), social integration (38.38%), focus on beneficiaries (37.37%), followed by: education (26.26%), solidarity (21.21%), beauty (13.13%), community (13.13%) (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Social values exposed in mission statements of Polish social cooperatives

Social values	N	[%]
1. Work integration (preventing work exclusion)	53	53,53
2. Social integration (preventing social exclusion)	38	38,38
3. Focus on beneficiaries (taking care of the needs of beneficiaries - unemployed, children, wards, etc.)	37	37,37
4. Education (promote learning and scholarship)	26	26,26
5. Solidarity (promote mutual fellowship, interest, and commitment among humanity)	21	21,21
6. Beauty (promote beauty of nature or the arts)	13	13,13
7. Community (promote civic life and strengthening and empowering communities)	13	13,13
8. Environment (promote preserving nature)	7	7,07
9. Innovation (promote creativity, uniqueness, imagination)	7	7,07
10. Compassion (promote empowering the weak, marginalized, vulnerable)	6	6,06
11. Dignity (strengthening self-esteem and promoting respect for other)	6	6,06
12. Health (promote healthy development, disease prevention, and cure)	6	6,06
13. Responsibility (promote individual accountability to and among others)	5	5,05
14. Sustainability (promote policies of sustainable economic development)	5	5,05
15. Happy and joyful life (promoting a happy life)	4	4,04
16. Independence (promote individual self-reliance and self-sufficiency)	4	4,04
17. Equity (promote fairness, equal access and opportunity for all, practice procedural justice)	3	3,03
18. Pluralism (promote diversity, tolerance, and respect for different ideas and beliefs)	3	3,03
19. Trust (promote the belief that all share common, underlying values, and most people can be trusted)	2	2,02
20. Equality (promote equal distribution of resources for all, practice distributive justice)	1	1,01
21. Tradition (promote preserving time-honored customs)	1	1,01
22. Voice (promote participation in policymaking by those affected)	1	1,01

**Source:** own study.

Economic values were highlighted in over half (57.57%) of the mission statements, although they never appeared independently, meaning they were always accompanied by at least one

social value. In 33 missions, only one value was recorded, relatively less often it was two (6) or three (10). The dispersion of the data was very strong ( $V = 135.88\%$ ) (Table 5).

**Table 5.** Economic values in mission statements of Polish social cooperatives – basic statistics

Number of social cooperatives presenting economic values in mission statements N	Min	Max	Arithmetic mean $\bar{x}$	Median Me	Mode Mo	Standard deviation SD	Coefficient of variation V [%]
57	0	9	1,1818	1	0	1,6059	135,88

Source: own study.

The research showed that 16 out of 21 economic/organizational values were highlighted in the mission statements of social cooperatives. The most common were: quality (33.33%) and focus on customers (27.27%), with the others appearing relatively less frequently, among them: focus on employees (11.11%), professionalism (9.09%), work engagement (9.09 %), business activity (7.07%), profit (6.66%) or research and development (6.06%). Other values were mentioned only sporadically, which may be surprising especially since the analysed entities run a business activity and offer their products/services. Values such as focus on competitors, efficiency, growth, company success were marginally exposed, whereas economic/organizational values such as risk taking, diversity or being the best were completely disregarded (Table 6).

Among the five values most often highlighted in the missions of social cooperatives, three were social (work, social integration, and focus on beneficiaries), while the other two were economic (quality and focus on customers).



**Table 6.** Economic / Organizational values exposed in mission statements of Polish social cooperatives

Economic / Organizational values	N	[%]
1. Quality	33	33,33
2. Focus on customers	27	27,27
3. Focus on employees	11	11,11
4. Professionalism	9	9,09
5. Work engagement	9	9,09
6. Business activity	7	7,07
7. Profit	6	6,06
8. Research and development	6	6,06
9. Product superiority	4	4,04
10. Flexibility	4	4,04
11. Work safety	3	3,03
12. Focus on competitors	1	1,01
13. Efficiency	1	1,01
14. Company success	1	1,01
15. Growth	1	1,01
16. Marketing and image	1	1,01

Source: own study.

## 7. Identity and values in Polish social cooperatives as perceived by their managers (survey results)

In the second part of the research, the data which were obtained from the analysis of the content of the mission statements of social cooperatives were verified. A questionnaire survey was sent to the managers of the examined 99 organizations. The feedback was sent by representatives of 12 entities. Therefore, the results obtained in this way could not be treated as representative, but they were analysed as specific cases. The respondents were asked, among other things, how they identify their organization. Managers of 8 organizations have identified their social cooperative with a company, 4 - with a social organization. The average ratings

assigned by the surveyed leaders to the three dimensions of identity were: enterprise - 4.67, social organization - 3.50, mutual support groups - 2.42.

Importantly, however, it is not the customer, i.e. the buyer of goods and services offered by the organization (4), but the cooperative employee (8) whom the leaders considered to be the most important to their entity. None of them indicated the beneficiaries or the environment (community, natural environment or local community, etc.).

In the course of the survey, the participants were shown a list of 55 values: social and economic, from among which they were asked to choose up to five that play the key part in their organizations. The most frequently indicated value was the quality of products/services (8 times), followed by social integration (6 times) and work integration (4 times). Occupational safety and employee orientation were both mentioned four times, whereas focus on beneficiaries and work engagement – three times. Other values were stated less often or not at all [nearly half of the analysed values (27) were not picked by any of the respondents, among them: pluralism, peace, solidarity, compassion, or marketing and image].

The research also analysed whether the choices of respondents regarding the most important values in their cooperatives differed depending on the identity of the organization stated by the leaders (enterprise / social organization).

In enterprise-oriented cooperatives, there were - according to the statements of their management staff - both economic (23) and social (18) values. In all eight cases, at least one economic or social value was indicated as significant. Therefore, there were no entities where only one type of values would be promoted. The most frequently chosen economic value was the quality of products/services, while the top social value was the social integration (Table 7).

**Table 7.** Values in Polish social cooperatives with an enterprise identity

Values	Sc 1	Sc 2	Sc 5	Sc 6	Sc 9	Sc 10	Sc 11	Sc 12
1. Being the best	■					■		
2. Community			■					
3. Company success					■			
4. Dignity							■	
5. Education						■		
6. Flexibility		■					■	
7. Focus on beneficiaries							■	■
8. Focus on customers	■							
9. Focus on employees				■				■
10. Growth								
11. Independence				■		■		
12. Innovativeness						■		
13. Participation						■		
14. Professionalism					■			
15. Quality	■	■		■	■		■	
16. Responsibility							■	■
17. Running a business		■						
18. Social integration		■	■	■				■
19. Wealth	■					■		
20. Work engagement			■		■			
21. Work integration		■	■	■	■			
22. Work safety	■		■					■

**Source:** own study.

**Explanation:**

Sc - Social cooperative

■ - social values

■ - economic / organizational values

Only in the case of one social-oriented cooperative (no. 8) all the values indicated by the leader were social. The other three entities chose not only social but also economic values. Furthermore, social values (6) were less frequent than economic ones (13). As in the case of entities with an enterprise identity, the most frequent economic value was the quality of products/services (three out of four responses), and for social value, that was social integration (two out of four responses). Let us also note that the work integration was not indicated as important in any cooperative identifying as a social organization, while in enterprise-oriented cooperatives it was indicated four times (Table 8).

**Table 8.** Values of Polish social cooperatives with social organization identity

Values	Sc 3	Sc 4	Sc 7	Sc 8
1. Community				
2. Effectiveness				
3. Equity				
4. Focus on beneficiaries				
5. Focus on customers				
6. Focus on competitors				
7. Focus on employees				
8. Growth				
9. Profit maximization				
10. Professionalism				
11. Quality				
12. Social integration				
13. Trust				
14. Work engagement				
15. Work safety				

Source: own study.

Explanation:

Sc - Social cooperative

 - social values

 - economic / organizational values

Among the five values most often chosen by the managers of social cooperatives, two were social (work and social integration) and three were economic (quality, focus on employees, work safety).

## 8. Conclusions

Social cooperatives, as part of the social economy sector, can be classified as hybrid organisations (cf. Young, Lecy, 2014; Jager, Schroer, 2013; Young, 2001). They operate in various organizational fields and are related to both markets and civil society. They are a combination of multiple institutional logics and deliver multiple forms of value. They are associated with different goals, structures, values, norms and identities. Ávila and Amorim (2020; cf. Moss et al., 2011), in the course of exploring Portugal social enterprises, underlined that the market ('Offering competitive', 'products and services', 'Customer service', 'Business expertise of staff' and 'Quality of products and services') and social ('Participatory decision-making', 'Offering an inclusive work environment' and 'Having a positive effect on the natural environment') dimensions are often associated with their organizational identity. While examining Spanish social enterprises Solórzano et al. (2018), analysed three dimensions of their organizational identity: economic, social and governance. In the research reported in this article, the authors were interested in the expression of identity contained in these organizations' mission statements. The conducted analyses point to the existence of three main elements in the identity of Polish social cooperatives. The first, and the most developed one, is a social element related to the organization's orientation towards solidarity and its responsibility for the work and social integration of persons at risk of social exclusion, engaging in social and/or work activity. The discussed organizations provide services to their members, focus on beneficiaries and often declare the pursuit of activities related to their comprehensive service. Among other things, they are involved in educational and cultural initiatives. This identity is related to high prioritization of values such as education and beauty (related to artistic activity that benefits the environment). The second exposed element of identity is related to economic activity. The organizations in question see themselves as enterprises that should provide high-quality products and focus on customer satisfaction. This identity is related to values such as professionalism and work engagement, which in turn make it possible for these organizations to turn profit. The aspect related to the employee's position in the organization is also observed, namely in the form of focus on employees and work safety. Matters related to business growth and competition, as well as values such as research and development, growth, product superiority, focus on competitors or company success are much less exposed. The third, least exposed area of identity has to do with responsibility for the environment and is associated with activities undertaken for the sake of community and environment.

In research on hybrid organizations there is a recurring question of what exactly determines the classification of an organization – its legal form or its identity. Among scientific publications we find studies whose authors search for a common organisational identity for

social enterprises with different legal forms. This refers in particular to research on the social economy sector in Europe (del Gesso, 2020; Monzón-Campos, Herrero-Montagud, 2016). The researchers also concentrate on the analysis of different organisational identities among social economy entities with different legal forms (Ávila, Amorim, 2020; Solórzano et al., 2018; Young, Lecy, 2014). Our research, focused on one legal form (social cooperatives in Poland), suggests the presence of different identities within it.

A more detailed analysis distinguishes four main types of expressions of social cooperatives' organizational identity, depending on how strongly its particular elements are emphasized:

- organizations oriented towards work and social integration,
- organizations oriented towards work and social integration with emphasis on the community (work integration priority with emphasis on activities that benefit the social environment),
- enterprises (focused only on market activities),
- CSR enterprises (prioritizing market activity with emphasis on corporate social responsibility in the area of natural environment and work environment).

Having analysed the content of the mission statements, it can be concluded that Polish social cooperatives tend to present themselves as organizations that are responsible for work and social integration, but at the same time as enterprises for which product quality and customer satisfaction are important.

Let us add that the declared identity and values were not necessarily consistent with each other. Those who identified their cooperative with an enterprise prioritized similar values as those who identified with a social organization (cf. Sc5 and Sc8). The case of the Sc7 cooperative was also particular in that it was described by the informant as a social entity which nonetheless prioritized economic values. It should be emphasized that the overwhelming majority of informants pointed to values related to work integration. The others almost always mentioned some other values related to work – focus on employees, work safety. Values associated with the activity in the area of social and work integration, focus on beneficiaries or employees, are therefore the core of the identity of Polish social cooperatives. They are supplemented with economic and, less frequently, social values implemented for the benefit of the environment.

Moss (2011) remarked that social ventures have dual identities. Research reported in this article has revealed that they can focus on one selected dimension. The study showed that social cooperatives may indeed have different identities - from strictly entrepreneurial (Sc7) through those that combine integration and entrepreneurship (Sc1, Sc9, Sc3), all the way to strictly oriented towards the social environment (Sc8). The first case in particular is worth mentioning. It is common in the literature to analyse the situation when a commercial enterprise operates socially and can be classified as a social enterprise. In the course of the study, a case was found where a cooperative (nominally the part of the social economy sector) identifies itself as an enterprise and emphasises in its mission only the market aspects of its activities. This requires further research and a more in-depth study. It is worth examining whether this also occurs in other countries. Other elements of organisational identity may also be in-

cluded in future research. This would probably require the use of a different research method, such as observation or interviews.

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