

University Of Hohenheim

Social and Institutional Change in Agricultural Development (490c)



**Supermarkets as a diversification strategy of coffee cooperatives:
the case of Coopedota R.L. in Costa Rica.**

MSc Thesis

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Environmental Protection and Agricultural Food Production

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Abstract:

Coffee specialized regions, like Santa Maria de Dota, have been seen to be subjected to greater hardships due to climatic changes, coffee price volatility unfavorable environmental conditions and food insecurity which have been seen to diminish with a greater diversification in the field. A few years ago, the coffee cooperative Coopedota R. L. proposed the creation of a cooperative supermarket which would be supplied by their associates, mainly compounded of small-scale farmers. The creation of this supermarket was also seen as a strategy to increase diversification in the coffee fields and in the cooperative market. Even though the economic study to evaluate the creation of the cooperative supermarket was positive the project was not taken forward.

To understand the motivations, interests and capabilities to undertake such a project a qualitative assessment was made in the village of Santa Maria de Dota, interviewing villagers, experts and producers.

It was seen that the need for diversification is perceived and urged for a greater stability and growth of the cooperative and the village. The creation of a cooperative supermarket with the inclusion of small-scale farmers is a source of motivation for diversification and expansion of their production. On the other hand the capacities of the cooperative Coopedota R.L. to go on with this project are not seen as favorable lacking in administration skills and quality control. Also the deficient experience of farmers supplying modern retailers is regarded as a general concern to fulfill the required standards of villagers regarding the new supermarket. Therefore a greater investment in agricultural assistance and technology for farmers is recommended, as well as a greater control of the production and quality of crops. This investment should further on be included in the economic study for the creation of the supermarket.