

Ramirez, S. (2021). Degrees of consensus and experts' views on Community and Complementary Currencies. *International Journal of Community Currency Research* 25(2), 28-41.
<https://doi.org/10.15133/j.ijccr.2021.0013>

This article is published under a *Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA)*: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>



© The Author(s), 2021



International Journal of Community Currency Research

VOLUME 25 (ISSUE 2, 2021) 28-41

DEGREES OF CONSENSUS AND EXPERTS' VIEWS ON COMMUNITY AND COMPLEMENTARY CURRENCIES

Sanel Alberto Contreras Ramirez *

* University Queen Margaret, Edinburgh, Scotland, sanelcc1@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the narratives of nine top-level experts on Community and Complementary Currencies (CCs). The study uses qualitative research tools adapted to identify common themes around the most pressing issues on CCs as seen by the participants. The research follows a dynamic and collaborative approach with the experts contributing. As a result, the research offers basic conceptual definitions to understand the meanings behind CCs, main projects, theories, typologies, and other concepts. There is also an in-depth exploration of topics such as finances and funding of CCs, education and awareness of CCs, and interoperability of exchanges between different projects.

KEYWORDS

Community and complementary currencies, monetary innovations, Delphi method, Thematic Analysis, experts' narratives, interoperability, values, education and awareness.

AKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to express my deepest gratitude to the nine experts on CCs who kindly contributed to the Delphi process stages from beginning to end. Each of your contributions is of unmeasurable value and made this research possible. To Stephen DeMeulenaere, Shigeto Kobayashi, Leander Bindewald, Matthew Slater, Jérôme Blanc, Georgina Gomez, Ester Barinaga, Christophe Place, and Anonymous. Also, I want to acknowledge the participation of Andreu Honzawa and Paulina Weiss as research collaborators and all the professional and personal help of my supervisor, Eurig Scandrett. To Vicky, COVID-19 survivor, who always admires my interests with the necessary down-to-earth approach and love. And to my mum, Susana Ramirez, you are simply the best.

Thank you

1. INTRODUCTION

The words of Community and Complementary Currencies (CCs from now) and the acronym CCs are frequently seen in available academic and grey literature referring to different types of alternative economic systems which work parallelly to the dominant and conventional one. Under this conceptual umbrella, some ideas find accommodation about experiences such as timebanks, mutual credits, LETS, business barter systems, circles of trust, etc.

CCs and all their different projects have consolidated an acknowledged trajectory within the world of what can be considered monetary innovations (Place, 2012) and the solidarity economy. This study attempts to approximate the concept of CCs with a blank sheet and allow the participation of recognised actors in the field who contribute with their ideas to discover the meanings behind CCs in their narratives. In this way, the study reveals the current debate and critical issues identified by the experts participating. The participants are prominently present across the CCs' academic research and practice field, which makes this research relevant to the state-of-the-art discussion in CCs. Although the study followed strict anonymity rules that complied with the methodological process, for the curiosity of the reader, most of the expert's identities are available in the acknowledgment section of this work.

The present work follows an innovative approach that meticulously analyses the experts' visions and opinions. The work intensively digs into the different understandings and concepts and discloses common perspectives that may help the development of CCs. There is also an element of co-construction of the research between the researcher's analysis and the participants' interests.

The motivation of this research is the contribution to CCs conceptualization and analysis. The initial hypothesis is whether the contributions from knowledgeable people can help CCs strengthen conceptualizations by identifying common narratives and themes that unite the worlds of academia and practice. The author responded to the research question by creating a space of debate and discussion for people who represent the academia and the practice of CCs, to unite their voices and discover coincidences of meanings relevant to the development of CCs. With this intention, this work provided a space for reflection, connection, debate, and learning.

The findings of the research are into two sections. Section one identifies the relationship between experts and the concept of CCs, addresses topics such as multicurrency societies, CCs aims, theories, typologies, and specific projects. Section two exposes the discussions around the common themes found within the experts' narratives. The focus is on finances and funding, education and awareness, and interoperability.

2. METHODS

The study shows a predominant qualitative character combined with the presence of the researcher as part of the research typical of Action Research and Grounded Theory (Glaser *et al.*, 1967) (Rowell *et al.*, 2015). The findings presented come exclusively from the application of The Delphi method combined with Thematic Analysis (T.A) (Clarke and Braun 2014). The Delphi method is a qualitative research method that attempts to find answers to difficult problems in a particular field of the expertise of a group of knowledgeable people participating as anonymous experts (Linston 1975).

To approach a study of this dynamic character, other potential qualitative methods were revised, such as those related to discussion groups. However, after a comparative analysis of the different approaches, the Delphi Method was revealed to be the most adaptable to the participants' needs such as tight agendas and preference of email and written communication for analysis and anonymity preservation. A literature review has also been an important element of the research that may expanded and justified some of the different findings, however, this was not a primordial requirement for the development of this research.

The Delphi method takes the name from the mythological Greek oracle Delphos for its forecasting potential. The methodological process unfolds through iterations of questionnaires and reports based on the answers (Linston 1975; Grime and Write 2016).

Anonymity is a crucial requirement for the efficiency of the Delphi method. Anonymity allows the experts to express their whole message and avoid the introduction of certain biases. For instance, the silence of some experts who expect the messages from representative people of a particular topic or the need to defend a message as someone of a recognized authority on a specific topic (Linston 1975). The mechanisms for the uses of anonymity

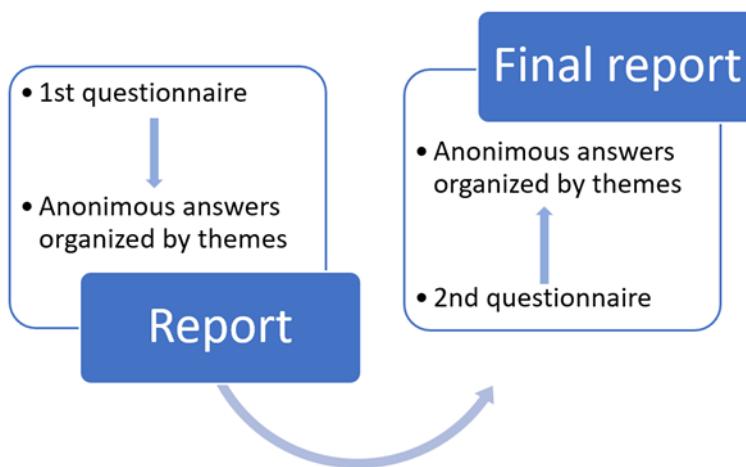
in this research numbered each expert from 1 to 9. Experts remained with the same number during the whole study, as a result, the experts were able to identify their answers together with other experts' answers in an organized manner. The participants were considered subjects who are present in the current academic research on CCs or who are involved in any well-known CCs project.

It is critical to dismiss any early judgment of the Delphi method as a tool for generating consensus. Instead, The Delphi method seeks to identify what is known as "stability of opinion" (Heiko 2012) this is considered when the expert does not change his/her opinion regardless of any divergent perspective. Following this method, the research revealed interesting insights of the nature of CCs, what are the common perspectives among the experts, main problems, and possible solutions.

The thematic analysis of the answers has been carried out following the guidelines offered by Clarke and Braun (2014) for the analysis of qualitative data. Specifically, there has been an important amount of effort put into the identification of generated common themes. The topics of these themes were established after a thorough process of reflection and comparative analysis to accurately represent the different narratives used by every expert. The results showed a degree of consonance which inform the discussion on the current development of concepts around the world of CCs as conceived by the nine experts participating.

Under the Delphi method, two iterations of consecutive questionnaires were produced, the questionnaires were followed by all the expert's answers organized by themes, and two reports on the answers to these questionnaires in between and at the end. Figure 1 illustrates the process. The process allowed the participants to interact with each other's contributions, reading and analysing theirs in connection with others at each step of the process.

Figure 1: The adapted Delphi research process.



The first questionnaire used open-ended questions which invited the experts to set the agenda of the study. This part evoked the expert's curiosities around important issues on CCs which revealed the common themes present in the expert's narratives.

The second questionnaire proposed 32 statements which were based on the different themes previously identified. The statements were analysed by means of Likert-type scales that mapped the expert's opinions and degrees of consensus.

In both questionnaires there were also closed-ended questions about what experts consider to be the main organizational parts of a CC, what were mentionable projects on CCs that the experts would consider remarkable examples, what are the priority aims when thinking of CCs, what are the background theories used and finally, as an attempt to use The Delphi method forecasting potential, the experts were asked to estimate a date when they think CCs will be the norm in future societies.

The next two criteria were developed for the analysis of the 32 statements with Likert-type scales that measured the experts' views and opinions.

- Groups of opinion: The five options of the liker-type scale ("strongly agree", "agree", "neither agree nor disagree", "disagree" and "strongly disagree") were grouped into three different groups of opinion. These were:

- Positive (+): which included the options of "agree" and "strongly agree".
- Neutral (N): which included the option of "neither agree nor disagree".
- Negative (-): which included the options of "disagree" and "strongly disagree".
- Degrees of consensus: "similar views" and "different views" were the two groups that measured the number of experts representing clear groups of opinion on the statements.
 - Similar views: when over 60% of experts were in the same group of opinion. This represented most experts sharing the same position or view of positive, neutral, or negative.
 - Different views: when the highest percentage of opinion was below 60%. This represented an even distribution of the different groups of opinion. Therefore, understanding that the opinion was divided among the experts.

$$\frac{\text{experts in the same group of opinion}}{\text{total of experts answering the statement}} \times 100$$

As an example, the results for the statement of "Interoperability between CCs is something desirable" showed that out of the nine experts offering their views, there were four experts with a positive view of the statement (44%), three of them were neutral (33%), and two negatives (22%). In this example, there was no majority over the 60% of experts sharing the same opinion. Therefore, this statement showed that the experts' views are different around the statement. In addition to this quantitative gathering of data, experts also had the chance to add comments to the statements.

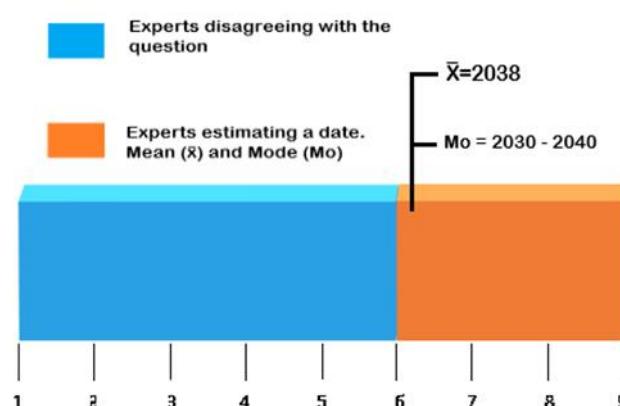
3. WHAT ARE CCS AND WHAT ARE THEY FOR THE EXPERTS PARTICIPATING?

The first section articulates the results of the closed-ended questions. It intends to provide the reader with a contextualization of the driven concepts of CCs in the eyes of the experts participating. This section also creates a base to understand the nature and context of further specific discussions on CCs.

3.1. 2038 forecast

To predict when CCs would become normal in society, the experts were asked to estimate a date for when they expected a "multicurrency society". This question finds inspiration in the concept of "monetary plurality" as found in Gómez et al. (2019). The concept of monetary plurality discusses the coexistence of different types of money into parallel economic circuits at a given time in history. The different authors in Gómez et al. (2019) do not share a common view on the ideas around monetary plurality. A similar feeling of different understandings or different views is perceived in the way experts contributed to this question. Figure 2 shows the distribution of the answers.

Figure 2. Forecasting of a multicurrency society.



As seen in figure 2, six out of nine experts understood that a multicurrency society was either a phenomenon not happening or a process already taking place. The answers of the three remaining experts who followed the researcher's perspective, made possible the calculation of 2038 as the mean or average date at which these experts

think a multicurrency society will happen. The mode is multimode and repeats two times all the values of the distribution which are between 2030 to 2040.

This section intentionally opened with the results of this question to show how the experts' perspectives may differ from each other.

3.2. Theories

One of the central aspects of this study is to understand the different experts' perspectives on CCs. Warned by one of the experts, it is crucial to attend to the specific type of CCs and avoid possible generalizations that lead to biases.

"I doubt over a too general reflection on CCs, since there are major differences between them (e.g., LETS, time banks, so-called barter schemes, local currencies). There is indeed a risk of being too general or saying things that are not adapted to kinds of CCs while adapted to others." Expert 4

The answers to the question about background theories showed a representative sample of the main theoretical frameworks used by the participants of this study. This may offer some early insights into the kind of thinking and understandings of the participating experts of this research. Figure 3 summarizes the different theoretical backgrounds mentioned by the experts.

Figure 3. Different theoretical frameworks used by experts.

Theoretical frameworks mentioned by one expert.	Theoretical frameworks mentioned by more than one expert
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Framework based on Evolutionary Economic Theory. - Elinor Ostrom and other authors on the commons. - No Small Change. - People Powered Money. - CCIA Implementation Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bernard Lietaer - The Polanyian approach - Full-Spectrum Economics of Christian Arnsperger (Integral Theory)

3.3. Preferred aims for CCs

While the background theories and 2038 as the predicted date for CCs may not be enough for contextualizing the concepts on CCs in the mind of the experts, the researcher proposed to the experts to choose between different aims when thinking on CCs by order of importance on a scale from 1 to 5 (being 1 the most important). The given options were:

- Protection of the Environment.
- Economic Justice.
- Countercyclical Economic Tool.
- Democracy and Participation.
- There was also the option of writing a different aim from the ones proposed.

Figure 4 below shows the results.

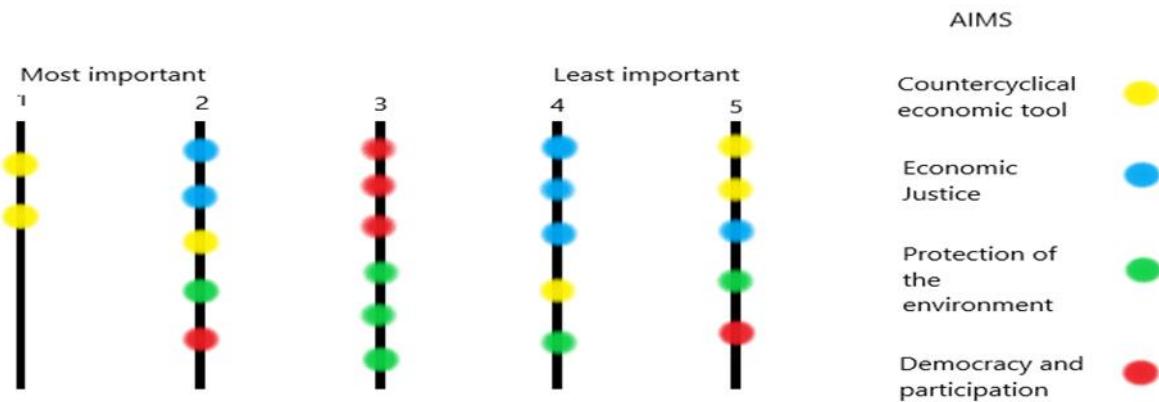
Other different aims offered by the experts were:

- "Appropriately expressing diversity of values that matter to humans".
- "Integration in a currency constellation pluralism".
- "People empowerment".
- "Administrative decentralization", "Separation of creation of money from the state".
- "Tools to create connections between people".
- "Local economic development and survival of communities in poor localities".

An interpretation of Figure 4 is that those aims among important priorities are also found on the opposite side. This trend applies mostly to the aims of countercyclical economic tools and economic justice as CC aims at opposite

sides of the priority scale. While democracy and participation together with the protection of the environment concentrate in the middle of the priority scale. These results may suggest an agreement on the central or middle priority for aims concerning environmental and social aspects of CCs whereas the positions on economic concepts may fluctuate from different extremes of the priority scale.

Figure 4. Experts' preference of different CC aims.

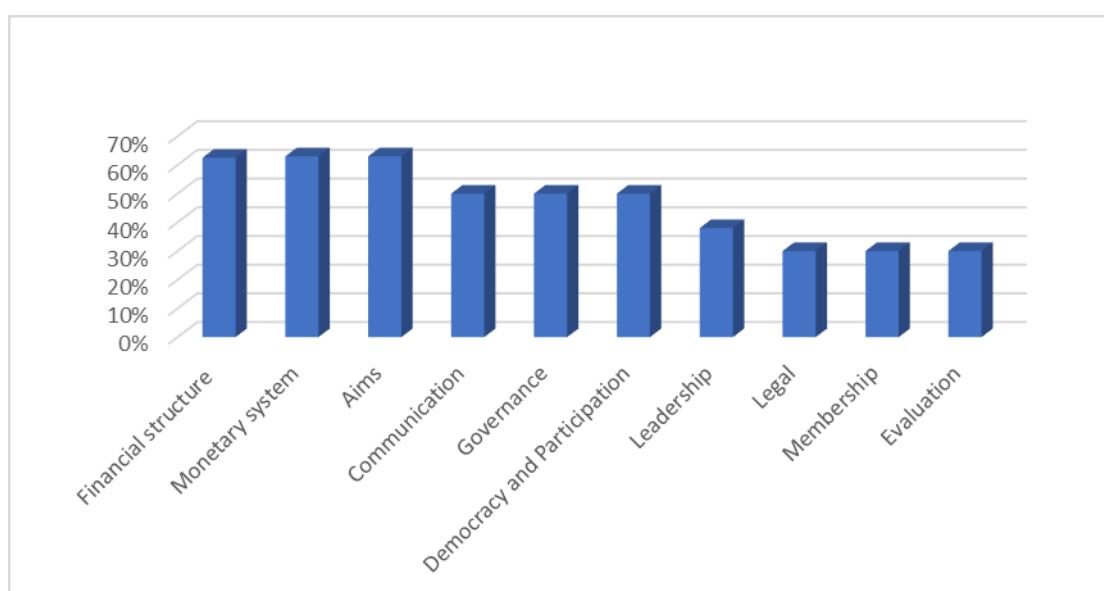


3.4. Typologies

The construction of typologies in CCs serves two different purposes. Firstly, it allows for the study and analysis of CCs main structures and patterns, and secondly, for the creation of design tools for CCs (Larue 2020). There is a variety of academic work around different typologies of CCs, each of these studies addresses the topic from different perspectives. Generally, an important focus on the understanding of the currency aims is an inexorable requirement for the building of typologies (Lietaer 2006; Blanc 2011). There are also typologies based on certain frameworks applied to specific case studies as the ones offered by Joachain and Klopfer's (2012), Bindewald et all, (2018), or Martignoni (2012).

An approach to a basic CCs' typology of organizational parts emerged as a result of the collected answers and the common themes generated which revealed ten main organizational parts of CCs. Figure 5 below shows the different parts next to the percentage of experts alluding to each part over a total of eight experts (one of the experts did not contribute to the question)

Figure 5. An organizational typology of CC main parts from the common narratives.



Source: own elaboration after the collected data from participants (check endnote)

- Financial structure: refers to the experts' ideas around mechanisms through which the project maintains its functioning costs, also referred to as "business plan". Failures in this specific part were a recurrent preoccupation for most of the experts who are concerned about many of the projects failing because of problems with their financial structures.
- Monetary system: refers to the experts' ideas around understandings, technology, and development of the different economic circuits of a CC.
- Aims: refer to the experts' ideas around the specific goals the different projects want to achieve.
- Communication: refers to the experts' ideas around the different information exchange among the system users, their organizational organs, external agents, institutions, and potential users.
- Governance: refers to the experts' ideas around different management and organizational styles of a project, this may vary from more directional and hierarchical to more horizontal, transparent, and democratic.
- Democracy and Participation: refer to the experts' ideas around democracy and participation as a transversal characteristic of all CCs.
- Leadership: refers to the ideas around the leader or the leadership structures that integrate and deliver CC projects.
- Legal: refers to the ideas about legal aspects concerning legislation affecting the development of the project at any stage.
- Membership: refers to the ideas about the ways through which members can be part or not of the project.
- Evaluation: refers to ideas around the assessment of the development of the project.

3.5. The experts' directory

Finally, in relation to the topic of typologies, the experts were asked to point at those successful CCs examples of their understanding of CCs main organizational parts. A total of eighteen specific projects appeared.

The WIR bank stands out mentioned by four out of the seven experts. Bristol Pound (currently ceased), Banco Palmas, Chiemgauer, Barter Card and Tempo Time Credits were mentioned by two different experts. Finally, the Worlg, Yorozu-Ya, International Monetary Systems, Monnaie Leman, Sol Violette, Berkshares, Calgary Dollars, Payback, Sardex, Hudson Valley Current, Dane County timebank and Eusko were only mentioned once by one different expert. One of the experts did not mention specific projects but referred to the Redes de Trueque in Argentina and the Kenyan cases.

With this final contribution, this section narrows down what the participants had in mind when thinking about CCs, therefore what specific projects the experts thought of when responding to the questions of this research.

4. MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR THE EXPERTS ON CCS

The analysis of the experts' narratives revealed a wide variety of common themes such as education and awareness, impact assessment, creation of value, failure of the systems, financing, and funding, convertibility among others (see endnote 2). The use of thirty-two statements based on the identified common themes (see table below, figure 6) allowed this research to measure the levels of consensus/agreement among the experts around the main discovered topics.

Using the Likert-type scale, the statements revealed the experts' views on the different topics. The experts also had the chance to support their positions with arguments and ideas contributing to a common debate. For this analysis, the statements were grouped by themes.

The overall results revealed that 62.5% of the statements corresponded to statements where experts saw things similarly or shared similar points of view. The remaining 37.5% accounted for the percentage of statements where experts saw things differently from each other. These results may celebrate a general sense of unity and shared vision of the experts in CCs of this study.

Figure 6. Statements grouped by themes and levels of consensus.

Similar or different views on each statement grouped by themes

		Similar views (>60%)	Different views (<60%)
Theme: Countercyclical economic tool			
- CCs can help recovering from an economic recession coming as a result of COVID-19.		88% (+)	
- CCs projects can help recovering from economic recessions and make societies and governments prepared for similar difficulties in the future.		88% (+)	
Theme: Finance and funding			
- There is a need for improving finance and funding structures.		75% (+)	
- It is important is that governments from all around the world invest in CCs, now more than ever.		75% (+)	
- Financing infrastructure is more important than financing specific projects.			33% (+) 22% (N) 44% (-)
Theme: Democracy and participation			
- It is important that CCs with social aims adopt important aspects of democracy and participation		88% (+)	
- Democracy and participation are not so important if the CC is aimed at the corporate sector.		75% Disagree	
- CCs are straightforward ways to allow democracy and participation and empowered citizens.			50% (+) 37.5% (N) 12.5% (-)
Theme: Aims, Creation of Value and Education and Awareness.			
- Equality and economic justice are a direct consequence of some CCs.		62% (+)	
- Protection of the environment can be a direct consequence of some CCs.		75% (+)	
- For a long time, legal tender money has conquered society as the ultimate truth, however, the monopoly has already collapsed opening the door for new forms of money. It is only matter of time for those new forms of money to become predominant.		62.5% Disagree	
- CCs can reach to a national scale.		66% (+)	
- There is risk that CCs reproduce same problems as conventional money.		66% (+)	
- Local economies nourished by CCs have more chances to successfully challenge globalization and competition.			44% (+) 33% (N) 22% (-)
- Inequality is a direct consequence of conventional money mechanisms.			44% (+) 33% (N) 22% (-)
- The biggest problem of conventional money is that it is mainly focused on the store of value function.			37.5% (+) 37.5% (N) 25% (-)
- Eventually, CCs will reshape the larger monetary structure.			50% (+) 37.5% (N) 12.5% (-)

Theme: Convertibility

- Although convertibility may augment trust and desirability of a CC, there is a risk of depending on a system that has failures by definitions and may lead the CC to same crises in the future. 88% (+)
- When the CC value is linked to conventional money by convertibility, it means that the CC is vulnerable to conventional money circumstances. 55% (+) 11% (N) 33% (-)

Theme: Impact assessment

- There is no consensus about what a good CC is, what are the best monetary designs or currency systems. 75% (+)
- There are two main types of CCs, those made for businesses and those made for individuals. 37.5% (+) 12.5% (N) 50% (-)
- There are not CCs specifically designed for the economy of a family systems. 28% (+) 29% (N) 43% (-)

Theme: Climate change

- Protection of the environment can be a direct consequence of some CCs. 75% (+)
- There is no point on implementing CCs for sustainability if climate emergency becomes unbearable. 88% Disagree
- The only realistic future of the global economy is one with zero CO2 Emissions. 71% Disagree

Theme: Interoperability

- Before interoperability happens at an important scale it is necessary to establish strong parameters of transparency and democracy as well as ethos and values. 75% (+)
- The most important thing for interoperability to start happening is to provide a technological tool which allows trading. After this is given, the rest will come into play. 75% (+)
- Promoting exchanges at larger distances with interoperability will increase CO2 emissions and harm the local economy networks. 22% (+) 22% (N) 55% (-)
- Interoperability between CCs is something desirable. 22% (-) 33% (N) 44% (+)
- There is still a long path before interoperability becomes a reality. 25% (+) 50% (N) 25% (-)

Theme: Legal

- Reforming legal texts is crucial for advancing in the development of CCs. 77% (+)
- Reforming legal texts has not been explored enough. 75% (+)

Theme: Database

- An updated database which accounts for the different experiences on CCs is needed. 77% (+)

Source: own elaboration (see end note for available web location).

This article offers a closer look at the themes of finance and funding, education and awareness, and interoperability as the most popular themes among the experts. Apart from these topics, all other topics, common themes, and the expert's debate and ideas discovered during the research are published and available in a shared folder on the internet (see endnote 1).

4.1. Finance and funding

Following the experts' contributions, there are two different sources of finance and funding in CCs, these can be external or internal.

There is a clear worry coming from several experts about the dependency of this external funding which may doom the CCs to their extinction after this funding finishes. In the experience of expert 1, this occurs around year three of existence.

The internal source is related to the own mechanisms in place which nurture the project of the necessary resources for their sustainability. Sometimes, the project can make use of their own credits to cover their expenses. Various experts also stated that the projects which function in this way have a longer life expectancy.

Overall, under the topic of finance and funding, it is identified the urge to improve this aspect of CCs.

During the research process, expert 6 mentioned the need for a statement that expresses the need for long-term research funding in this field. To contribute at some degree to this demand, two of the three statements mentioning aspects of finance and funding may represent a position of agreement among the experts who see the need for improving finance and funding structures and encourage government investment.

For the next statements, there were Majorities of above 70% of experts who agreed or strongly agreed with:

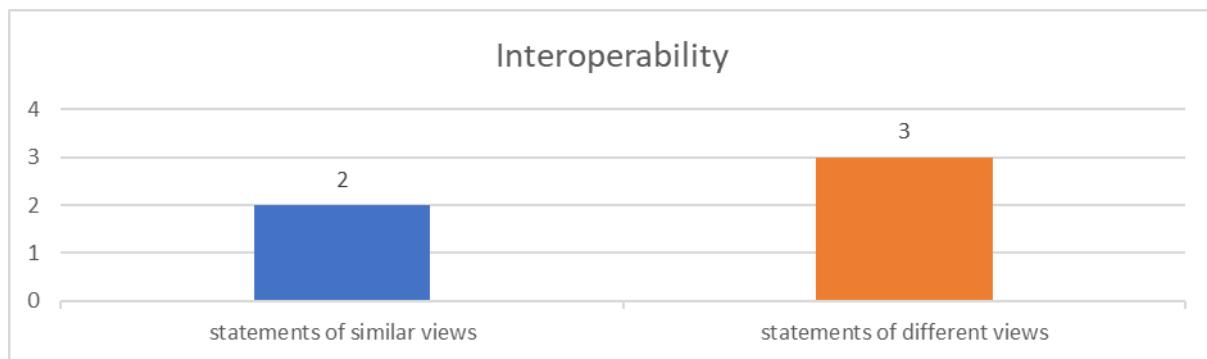
- “There is a need for improving finance and funding structures”.
- “It is important that governments from all around the world invest in CCs, now more than ever”.

4.2. Interoperability

The author defines Interoperability between CCs as the mechanisms that allow different systems of exchange to manage, coordinate and execute exchanges between them. Statements around interoperability between CCs explored experts' views around main aspects such as feasibility, desirability, governance, and relationship with climate change.

As seen in figure 7, there is one more statement of different views and two statements of similar views regarding interoperability, this results may warn about the aliveness of the debate about this topic.

Figure 7. Interoperability levels of consensus.



On the side of similar views, 75% of the experts agreed with the need of developing strong parameters of transparency and democracy as well as ethos and values proposed in the next statement.

- “Before interoperability happens at an important scale it is necessary to establish strong parameters of transparency and democracy as well as ethos and values”.

Expert 1, the only expert disagreeing, advocated for trust as a fundamental requirement over transparency, democracy, ethos, and values proposed in the statement. The expert saw these as secondary elements of help for the building of trust.

For the next statement, there was also a 75% of experts with similar views, although this time the opinion was grouped around disagreement. The statement says as follows:

- “The most important thing for interoperability to start happening is to provide a technological tool which allows trading. After this is given, the rest will come into play”.

Most experts disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement acknowledging that only a technological tool may not be enough. Experts 1, 3, 4 and 5 mentioned important aspects such as governance, entrance and exit conditions, adaptation of the technology to the projects, adaptability, and shared desirability among projects of different kinds such as time banks, LETS or business barter networks.

There were three statements on the side of different views. The first statement is about the negative impact that interoperability may provoke because of the promotion of exchanges at longer distances.

- “Promoting exchanges at larger distances with interoperability will increase CO2 emissions and harm the local economy networks”.

Here, 55% of the experts disagreed, 22% agreed and 22% neither agreed nor disagreed. When confronting the experts' ideas from different groups of opinion, experts 1 and 5, who disagreed with the statement, mentioned the need for spatial proximity between CCs that are interoperable what assumes that interoperability would not be a threat to the increase of CO2. On the side of the experts who agreed, only expert 3 offered some comments in support of their positions and explained that “the relocation of the economy is not the aim of every currency” acknowledging the threat to the local economy networks of those projects which do not share the same values.

The opinions were also divided for the statement of:

- “Interoperability between CCs is something desirable”.

Here, 44% of the experts agreed, 22% disagreed, and 33% neither of both. Among the experts who agreed, an important reason for interoperability desirability was the power held in interoperability for reaching scale. On the disagreement side, reaching scale was seen by expert 2 as a “weird element sneaking into alternative economics”.

The last statement reveals difficulties among the experts to decide whether interoperability is close to happening or not.

- “There is still a long path before interoperability becomes a reality”.

Here a 50% of the experts neither agreed nor disagreed, 25% agreed 25% disagreed. Among the reasons for agreement, expert 4 stated the inexistence of interoperability links between the CCs known by the expert.

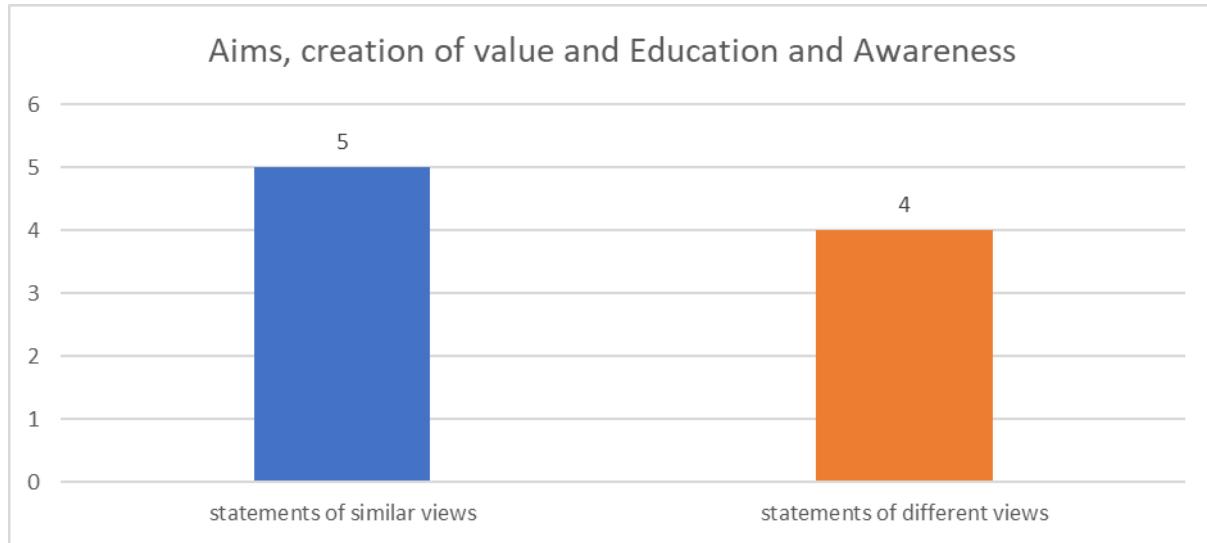
In a similar line of thought, expert 8 stated that “not everybody is convinced of this desirability”, which was revealed to be true for the previous analysed statement. This argument was also offered by expert 1 who neither agreed nor disagreed. Expert 1 argued that the difficulty for interoperability to happen is more related to politics, here the expert mentioned the Credit Commons, an interoperability protocol in development (Slater and Jenkin 2016). Expert 3 and expert 5 also referred to the existence of tools for interoperability but both identified financing as an obstacle for interoperability to happen.

4.3. Education and Awareness.

Under the researcher's analysis criteria based on Clarke and Braun's (2014) Thematic Analysis, the statements around the common themes of education and awareness seemed to merge with the themes of value creation and aims. Based on what seems to be the coincidence and intertwining of ideas in the statements, the researcher decided to unify these three themes into the same category of analysis as education and awareness.

The researcher did not find an easy task to analyse the experts' messages on these themes and prefers to encourage the reader to make use of the experts' comments for their specific research purposes (See endnote 4). The next is a descriptive account of the different experts' views.

Figure 8. Education and Awareness levels of consensus.



The following five statements grouped similar views among the experts. The statements explored aspects of equality, economic justice, and protection of the environment concerning CCs.

- For the statement of "Equality and economic justice are a direct consequence of some CCs" 62% of the experts answering shared a similar view of agreement.
- The statement "Protection of the environment can be a direct consequence of some CCs" found a higher level of agreement with one more expert, this gave to the statement a 75% of agreement.
- The next statement also grouped similar views "For a long time, legal tender money has conquered society as the ultimate truth, however, the monopoly has already collapsed opening the door for new forms of money. It is only matter of time for those new forms of money to become predominant". In this case, the group of opinion was on the disagreement side of the scale. Here, a 62% of experts disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- The statement "CCs can reach to a national scale" achieved a 66% of experts agreeing.
- The last statement "There is a risk that CCs reproduce same problems as conventional money" reached a 66% of experts' agreement.

The statements which divided the opinions of the experts were:

- Local economies nourished by CCs have more chances to successfully challenge globalization and competition.
- Inequality is a direct consequence of conventional money mechanisms.
- The biggest problem of conventional money is that it is mainly focused on the store of value function.
- Eventually, CCs will reshape the larger monetary structure.

5. DISCUSSION

In this work, the acronym CCs generally referred to the wide phenomenon of Community and Complementary Currencies, notwithstanding, as the research progressed, it became clear how the experts' understandings of CCs differed from each other. The most symbolic example of this may be the eighteen different projects mentioned by the experts, with only The WIR Bank mentioned in common by a maximum of four experts. This directory of projects may be a representative sample to understand what experts think when thinking about CCs. However, an in-depth exploration of each of these projects scaped the scope of this research as the focus was more on the dialogical dynamic, exchange of ideas, and discourse analysis.

The findings section opened with 2038 as the year when CCs will be the norm within a multicurrency society. This opening is made on purpose to call the attention of the reader. Yet, the author is aware of any possible reaction about the inaccuracy or speculative character of this finding but still enjoys the playful element of this particularity of the research method and hopes that the reader finds it useful.

When understanding the overall contributions of the experts, the reader could get the impression of an emphasis put on the socio-political aspects, the aims, values, and mechanisms of CCs, where the evidence showed that most of the experts agreed and contributed here the most. On the contrary, this does not seem to be the case when the discussion moves to more economic terms.

Even though qualitative data may have a myriad of interpretations, clear positions and views are seen in the discourse of the experts which is also backed by evidence. In relation with this, another impression could be a general feeling of agreement, when for example, 62.5% of the statements represented similar views of the experts, yet, being this an evidence-based fact, a closer look at each comment and idea of the experts will always reveal more precise information as even one expert disagreeing with the rest can yield great insight on the studied matter.

As a final reflection, carrying out and analysing qualitative research is an arduous endeavour. The information given by the participants may have shown differences that sometimes seemed incompatible with each other. For this reason, many hours were necessary to read and make sense of the different discourses that eventually produced this organised account of the research process. The reader is encouraged to do his/her exploration of the raw data given by each expert. The information is abundant, and all the data is available online and can be found in the different endnotes.

6. CONCLUSION

This dynamic research became a space for learning and interaction of those people involved in the development of CCs. The fruit of that interaction was a general mapping of the contextualization and main concepts around the field of CCs. The analysis of this research is an opportunity to approximate the current discussion, curiosities, and interests in CCs. The research process approached the topic of CCs from the broadest sense while uniting the experts' voices around crucial issues such as the need to improve the finances and funding of CCs. This study can help those who are relatively new to the understanding of CCs, as a general approximation to their main conceptualizations, meanings, perspectives, and understandings. The results and data of the study can be used as a source of inspiration for the expansion of knowledge and justification of investment in CCs.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arnsperger, C. (2010). Full-Spectrum Economics: Toward an Inclusive and Emancipatory Social Science (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203860908>

Blanc, J. (2011) Classifying "CCs": Community, complementary and local currencies' types and generations International Journal of Community Currency Research 15 (2011) D 4-10

Bindewald, L (2018). The grammar of money: an analytical account of money as a discursive institution in light of the practice of complementary currencies. Doctoral thesis, University of Cumbria (awarding body Lancaster University).

Bindewald, L., Martin, A., & Mccann, D. (2015). People Powered Money-- - Designing, developing & delivering community currencies. New Economics Foundation.

Clarke V., Braun V. (2014) Thematic Analysis. In: Michalos A.C. (eds) Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research. Springer, Dordrecht

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1999). Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203793206>

Gómez, G.M. (Ed.). (2018). Monetary Plurality in Local, Regional and Global Economies (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315272238>

Heiko, A (2012). Consensus measurement in Delphi studies Review and implications for future quality assurance, Technological Forecasting & Social Change 79 (2012) 1525-1536

Joachain, H. and Klopfer, F. (2012) 'Emerging trend of complementary currencies systems as policy instruments for environmental purposes: changes ahead?' International Journal of Community Currency Research 16 (D) 156-168 <www.ijccr.net> ISSN 1325-9547

Larue, L (2020) 'A conceptual framework for classifying currencies' International Journal of Community Currency Research Volume 24 (Winter 2020) 45-60; www.ijccr.net; ISSN 1325-9547; DOI <http://dx.doi.org/10.15133/j.ijccr.2020.004>

Lietaer, B & Hallsmith, G. (2006). Community Currency Guide Global Community Initiatives. Download at: <http://www.lietaer.com/2009/12/community-currency-guide/>

Linston, H, A and Turoff, M (1975). The Delphi method Reading, Mass.: Addison-wesley Pub. Co., Advance book program.

Martignoni, J. (2012) 'A new approach to a typology of complementary currencies' International Journal of Community Currency Research 16 (A) 1-17 <www.ijccr.net> ISSN 1325-1 - 9547

Place, C. (2012) Impact assessment of economic and monetary innovations for their financing and improvement: why is it necessary for social transformation projects management? Available online at CREATIVE MONETARY VALORIZATION: (rero.ch)

Place,C. & Bindewald, L.(2015).Validating and improving the Impact of Complementary Currency Systems through impact assessment frameworks. International Journal of Community Currency Research, SSN 1325-- 9547

Rowell L, L, Pollush E, Y, Riel M & Bruewer A (2015) Action researchers' perspectives about the distinguishing characteristics of action research: a Delphi and learning circles mixed-methods study, Educational Action Research, 23:2, 243-270, DOI: 10.1080/09650792.2014.990987

Salter, M and Jenkins, T (2016) The Credit Commons: a money for the solidarity economy. Available at <https://creditcommons.net/assets/credit-commons.pdf>

END NOTES

1. All the documents produced during the research process following The Delphi method.
 - <https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/19XLvi6BINTMQfQIE6s1yDkMZxKiNbSo>
2. Links to the thematic analysis of the answers and report on the first round.
 - https://docs.google.com/document/d/1H387E_B1Wm3rC1qet8mBPx2xVgv5rm2S/edit
 - <https://docs.google.com/document/d/15znG7pSnYMpgAG9iEXtDy3RjXqaToBI/edit>
3. Links to the thematic analysis of the answers and report on the second round
 - https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bEWhTQScPfLDi1lBtJDjKFDjRO_LOMNF/edit
 - https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bEWhTQScPfLDi1lBtJDjKFDjRO_LOMNF/edit
4. Link to the data relevant to Education and Awareness, Value creation and Aims.
 - https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bN8Cl0ujnsPgxZofQzeHj0w7P4MgGOGY/edit?usp=drive_web&ouid=100823194547430644301&rtpof=true