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URBAN RESILIENCE AND THE ALTERNATIVE ECONOMY: A METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH APPLIED TO NORTHERN SPAIN*

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PAZ BENITO DEL POZO and ALEJANDRO LÓPEZ-GONZÁLEZ

ABSTRACT. In urban contexts of prolonged economic crisis, there emerge new forms of economies that express a different way for producers and consumers to have an active presence in the market and be agents in the city's economy. The initiative is taken above all by the most vulnerable groups, which seek creative unconventional responses to their situation, with or without the intervention of public authorities. This reaction is interpreted in this study as urban resilience, and it is linked to the concept of sustainability and a series of alternative economic practices that should be analyzed via a specific methodology that allows us to understand their nature and scope. As a result, our research question is twofold. First, can operative criteria be established to identify and typify these new forms of urban economy? And, related to the previous question, what influence does the phenomenon have on medium-sized cities? We define medium-sized cities as cities that have a population of between 50,000 and 250,000 people as well as activities and functions that position the city dynamically within the surrounding urban system (Andrés López 2008). To these ends, this investigation spans three phases: a theoretical-conceptual review; definition of criteria and classification of alternative or resilient economic practices; and a case study focused on the city of León in northern Spain, for the purpose of understanding the phenomenon and its relative scope. *Keywords: urban resilience, alternative economic practices, sustainability, León, northern Spain.*

CITIES, SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE: A DEEP CONNECTION

There is a large body of literature on the need to achieve more sustainable cities and the concept of sustainability. These topics have been hotly debated within geography, urban planning, and the other disciplines that have addressed urban governance since the beginning of the twenty-first century. Moreover, the most widespread urban policies on sustainability, and the examples to be followed, place emphasis on aspects such as urban transport, planning and measurement of carbon emissions, energy-efficient buildings, air quality, the use of green energy, waste management, ecosmart infrastructure, and the promotion of

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healthy lifestyles that involve health systems and their daily activities (Rueda 2012). The objectives and strategies of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme support this approach (<https://es.unhabitat.org/>), which opens the door to consideration of new forms of production and consumption in cities: ones that are more environmentally responsible, more local, more collaborative, and less impulsive. 35

Regarding whether cities may or may not be sustainable, there are well-founded answers that set out the basic principles for any sustainable city. It must be compact and diverse. It must form a network with its regional environment. It must promote public transport and prioritize people's accessibility. It must give greater prominence to public spaces, which should facilitate sociocultural identification and relationships, be secure and multifunctional, and encourage people to live together in harmony and to interact with one another (González Reverté 2002) In addition to this, citizen participation and support for initiatives that arise as community-focused answers to everyday, immediate problems are factored into the conceptualization of urban sustainability. A city with these characteristics will not be free of tensions, but it will offer optimism when it comes to opening up opportunities for establishing future activities: the city can be a space for prosperity and happiness (Gaspar 2016). 40 45 50

On the topic of livable cities, some authors claim that “in diagnoses carried out by international bodies, there are statements of confidence in the ability of cities, which are considered as a positive factor in overcoming problems, to improve populations' living conditions and even to resolve economic crisis” (Capel 2016, 34). But at the same time, many negative aspects and problems that exist in cities have been acknowledged. These include unequal access to opportunities and resources; old and new forms of social exclusion, marginalization, and poverty; substandard housing and/or a lack of housing; and low levels of social cohesion. The future of the city requires “an agreement on the need to limit the role of the market and the private sector and to give pre-eminence to the public sector” (Capel 2016, 39). 55 60

Sustainability, therefore, is not merely an environmental issue. Rather, it has an economic, social, and urban-planning dimension that requires the attention of a wide range of agents that should be involved, via very diverse projects, activities, and resources, in strategies aimed at building cities that are spaces for producing and interacting, and are pleasant and satisfactory for most of their inhabitants. But tensions and conflicts in the city have, at least since industrialization began, betokened divisions and generated processes of exclusion, social segregation of space, inequality, and so forth. These have been exacerbated in contexts of crisis and given rise to a very wide range of responses (Albertos and Sánchez 2014). 65 70

These considerations connect with and have aggravated the situation generated by the global crisis of 2008 and its impact on cities, which in this context represent the local level (I understand the complex global/local relationship according to the terms deployed by Jordi Borja and Manuel Castells [1997] in their discussion of it). 75

The phenomenon known as urban resilience also plays a role here (Méndez 2012). It demonstrates the extent to which citizens organize and seek formulas that allow them to live with dignity in a hostile and precarious context, in which the market places well-being and opportunities for improvement and progress beyond the reach of a growing number of people. For some authors, resilience appears to be a real alternative to sustainable development (Davoudi 2012), because it prepares individuals and society to face and neutralize threats and to formulate responses that help them to overcome disasters or adversities, with these responses reducing future risks and vulnerabilities (Solana 2016). 80 85

Resilience is a term that emerged within psychology during the twentieth century (Becoña 2006), but what is of interest here are the meanings of the word that have become widespread in social and urban studies. The literature on urban resilience confines the phenomenon to the field of interactions between the city and the natural environment in extraordinary conditions (natural disasters) or in cases where there is a decline in ordinary conditions (significant and persistent changes associated with climate change). Authors such as Stephen Tyler and Marcus Moench (2012) interpret resilience from an environmentalist perspective, indicating that it consists in individuals' ability to innovate and accept changes for the purposes of contributing to rehabilitating the city in the face of tensions—ones foreseeable or otherwise—in the urban climate. Robin Leichenko's (2012) contribution represents a further step forward in the fine tuning of the concept of resilience. She understands resilience as the ability of a typical city and/or an urban system to support a wide range of shocks and pressures. This definition not only encompasses climate risks but also a wide variety of unfavorable circumstances of an environmental or social kind. 90 95 100

Jeb Brungmann (2012), meanwhile, emphasizes the ability of different agents within the city to continue to provide income or benefits in the presence of different circumstances and conjunctures. In an extensive discussion of contributions to this concept, Sara Meerow and others (2016) assert that urban resilience describes the ability of an urban system—whether it is considered as a whole or in terms of its various socio-ecological and socio-technological components and over the course of time and different spatial scales—to maintain or regain its desired functions, to adapt to changes, and to transform systems that in the present limit its capacity for future adaptation. This definition is more ambitious than the previous ones, because it covers the resistance-adaptation-change-prevention mechanisms that define a fully resilient attitude. 105 110

The environmentalist approach is preserved and enriched in the work of Paty Romero-Lankao and others (2016), who interpret the concept of resilience via the prism of its relationship with the concepts of sustainability, vulnerability, and capacity. Sustainability refers both to people's ability to maintain their base of social and natural resources and to their capacity to respond to stresses and shocks (which is ultimately the essence of resilience). In fact, one study (Romero-Lankao and Gnatz 2013) indicates that sustainability implies maintaining the capacity of an urban area's natural ecosystem to support the present needs of the people within its limits at the same time as its resources are safeguarded in order to meet future generations' needs, while resilience is about populations' and urban systems' ability to support a wide range of risks and tensions.

If we consider the concept of social resilience, the subject changes: it is not cities that manifest a capacity for resilience, but the human collectives that cohere through social relations that to a greater or lesser degree are close. In the words of Peter Hall and Michèle Lamont (2013, 2): "We use the term 'social resilience' to refer to the capacity of groups of people bound together in an organization, class, racial group, community or nation to sustain and advance their well-being in the face of challenges to it." Approaching the matter from another standpoint, Brigit Maguire and Patrick Hagan (2007) indicate that social resilience is groups' and communities' capacity to recover from or respond positively to crises. These two contributions are sufficient to identify social resilience with different kinds of social collectives' resilience to negative shocks.

Therefore, resilience is the demonstration of a capacity to withstand external shocks, whether these have a natural origin or a human one. It is also the capacity to adapt to conditions that are different to those usually encountered (for example, situations of prolonged economic recession), to recover and to return to the previous state, or even to improve upon it. And it is the ability to eliminate or modify components that weaken the possibilities of adapting to future tensions. These traits are essentially social, because those who manifest resilience are, on one hand, the people behind urban policies (agents with a decision-making capacity), and, on the other, individuals, via the strategies and models of organization adopted (either individually or collectively).

In spite of the previous considerations, there are authors who take a very critical stance regarding the phenomenon of resilience and its real meaning. Among these authors are Raven Cretney (2014) and Katrina Brown (2014), who highlight that resilience should not be interpreted as something that is "necessarily good," in the sense that the capacity for resistance of marginal social collectives or of certain territories may be a manifestation of the authorities' interest in maintaining the status quo—or a mere excuse for them to hold back

resources from marginalized populations based on the argument that they should fend for themselves.

At the empirical level, this research's focus is on individuals and the actions that they propose to tackle an adverse socioeconomic context; these individuals exhibit a resilient will and, in general, act on behalf of or belong to neighborhoods pressured by the impact of the 2008 crisis—that is, neighborhoods with low income levels, high levels of unemployment, and deficiencies in terms of urban infrastructure. 160

ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIC PRACTICES: AN URBAN-RESILIENCE RESPONSE

In contexts of economic crisis, as we have already seen, among the citizens and groups that are weakest and most affected there arise new forms of survival on the edges of the conventional economy, and even beyond it on alternative levels to the structure of dominant socioeconomic relations (Conill and others 2012). These alternative forms are not essentially novel, and their origin lies not only in the need to overcome critical socioeconomic situations: the gravity of the crisis only promotes their growth and expansion among groups that for ideological or lifestyle-related reasons would never have considered resorting to them (Cantalapiedra 2012; Méndez 2015). 165 170

As alternative economic practices (AEP) are a minority phenomenon—if not a marginal one—within the overall economic picture, study of them in both economic and geographic thinking has traditionally been limited to heterodox and relatively recent currents, though it is possible to find antecedents as remote as utopian socialism (Gritzias and Kavoulakos 2016). A conceptual starting point may be the idea of the common good (Felber 2014; Etxezarreta 2014), in which participation and open development models are advocated in connection with ideas such as common goods, basic income, or complementary currencies. 175 180

The basic concept is that of alternative economies, which Stephen Healy (2008) characterized based on two perspectives: the first conceives of these as an alternative response to the dominant capitalism and its systems of governance, and the second presents them as an epistemological rupture that leads to the economy's being conceived as a heterogeneous framework, as opposed to the uniformity encouraged by economics as a science. Therefore, proponents of this concept place emphasis on aspects such as horizontal economic relations over vertical ones, the activities of certain components that fall on the fringes of or outside business logic (the concept of social reproduction in opposition to profit is a very significant presence here), or activities in local geographic areas, as opposed to the economies of scale inherent in the majority of studies from conventional economics. 185 190

The specific practices proposed are the other element on which economies of this type are based. Authors such as Andrew Jones and James T. Murphy (2010) 195

consider these practices as stable, routine, or improvised social actions that constitute and reproduce social spaces via agents or diverse communities that organize materials, produce, consume, and/or derive means from the economic world. Economic practices understood in this way have their origins in the actions of a very diverse set of individual and collective groups, and they go beyond the classic public sector-companies-households trinity. For example, they take into account agents that operate within facets particular to social reproduction that do not translate into salaried remuneration, or cultural groups that operate outside conventional economic circuits.

Another approach to considering the nature of these economic practices can be found in Duncan Fuller and Andrew E.G. Jonas's study (2003). They establish the existence of three types of otherness—alternative-oppositional alternative-substitute and alternative-additional—in accordance with whether an economy or practice rejects the values and practices of capitalism, replaces them without questioning them, or, without rejecting conventional principles, offers a possibility of choosing a practice that runs parallel to the economy's main-stream channels. Andrew Jonas (2010) subsequently simplified this idea of otherness and went on to consider these practices as a real alternative to capitalism that depend to a large extent on geographical specificities.

Gibson-Graham (2008; 2010) then enhanced Jonas's (2010) view by putting forward a systematization of this diverse set of economic practices. Gibson-Graham initially focused on three aspects: enterprise, labor, and transactions. Two other factors—property and finance—were added later on (Table 1).

Gibson-Graham's proposal for two categories of practices—ones that are "alternatives to capitalism" and ones that are "noncapitalist"—makes a classification of great methodological relevance possible, because it sheds light on the phenomenon's necessary typological discrimination.

Within Spanish economic geography, Ricardo Méndez (2015) proposes four criteria to define alternative economic practices: first of all, solidarity, a value that gives the practices a principle and a motivation; second, the mode of organization, which is based on the formation of collaborative networks; third, strategy based on social innovation; and fourth, the objective or the intention of being an alternative to the dominant socioeconomic system. Méndez also indicates that spatial proximity is a strictly geographical factor that characterizes minority and localized practices.

These elements are collected in in turn by José Luis Sánchez Hernández and others (2017), who define AEP as "models of economic coordination (production, distribution, consumption, financing) whose participants: are governed by the principles of autonomy, reciprocity, and democracy; promote noncompetitive values (such as solidarity, sustainability, cooperation, equity, and inclusion); and seek to eliminate, transform, or overcome the hegemonic variety of

TABLE 1—THE DIVERSE ECONOMY

ENTERPRISE	LABOR	PROPERTY	TRANSACTIONS	FINANCE
Capitalist	Wage	Private	Market	Mainstream Market
Alternative Capitalist	Alternative paid	Alternative private	Alternative market	Alternative market
State owned	Self-employed	State-managed assets	Fair trade	Cooperative banks
Environmentally responsible	Reciprocal work	Customary (clan) land	Alternative currencies	Credit unions
Socially responsible	In kind	Community land trusts	Underground market	Community-based financial institutions
Nonprofit	Work for welfare	Endogenous knowledge (intellectual property)	Barter	Microfinance
Noncapitalist	Unpaid	Open access	Nonmarket	Nonmarket
Worker cooperatives	Housework	Atmosphere	Household sharing	Sweat equity
Sole proprietorships	Volunteer	International waters	Gift giving	Family lending
Community enterprise	Self-provisioning	Open-source IP	Hunting, fishing, gathering	Donations
Feudal	Slave labor	Outer space	Theft, piracy, poaching	Interest-free loans
Slave				

Source: Taken from Gibson-Graham (2010).

capitalism in the geographical context in which they operate” (Sánchez Hernández and others 2017, 69).

Interpreted in this fashion, AEP place emphasis on moral values, which is in line with what has been described as the social and solidarity-based economy. This economy is social because it implies a particular regime of ownership, distribution, and sharing of profits, and it is solidarity-based owing to the desire for democratic action in which social relations of solidarity prevails over individual interests or material benefit (Bioteau and Fleuvert 2014, 890–891).

APPROACH AND CRITERIA FOR ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIC PRACTICES

When it comes to linking the nature of alternative economic practices with existing economic modalities, the most suitable analytical match is with the social economy (Table 2) typified by Luis Guridi and Juan Carlos de Mendiguren (2014, 21) with the following features:

- a. A new way of producing, consuming, and distributing that is proposed as a viable and sustainable alternative for satisfying individual and

TABLE 2—TERMS AND TYPOLOGIES OF THE SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY-BASED ECONOMY

TERM	ENTREPRENEURSHIP TYPOLOGY
-Third Sector	- Cooperatives
-Alternative economy	- Mutuels
-Voluntary sector	- Friendly societies
- Nonprofit Sector	- Foundations
-Informal economy	- Worker-owned companies
-Popular economy	- Insertion companies
-Self-managing economy	- Fair-trade companies
-Community economy	- Social enterprises
-Social economy	- Domestic work
-Solidarity-based economy	- Associative entrepreneurship
-Other economy	- Recovered enterprises
	- Producers' associations
	- Consumers' associations
	- People's fairs
	- Family gardens
	- Solidarity-based finance
	- Ethical banking
	- Solidarity-based banking, etc.

Source: Adapted from Guridi and De Mendiguren 2014.

global needs and aspires to become consolidated as an instrument of social transformation.

- b. A way of living that encompasses the integrity of persons and refers to subordination of the economy to its true purpose: sustainably providing the material bases for human beings' personal, social, and environmental development. 255
- c. It incorporates universal values that should govern society and relations between all citizens—equity, justice, economic fraternity, social solidarity, and direct democracy—into the management of economic activity. 260

Owing to their very nature and to the deliberate drive to create physical, social, and symbolic spaces beyond the conventional market and global capitalism, alternative economic practices can be interpreted as an expression of urban resilience. And, as a result, these practices are also associated with sustainable development, since some of them are based on principles such as autonomy and development focused on needs, resilience, and democracy. And they also reflect on the concept of common good and the public interest (Gendron 2004). 265 270

However, some authors caution that “the social economy is a necessary but not sufficient condition for sustainable development. In theory, its principles and values are consistent with those of sustainable development, but these concordances

sometimes become weaker when one focuses on to the level of practices, because environmental principles are relegated to a secondary position when it comes to decision making, and the social economy's companies do not necessarily behave in a way that can be considered environmentally sustainable" (Guridi and De Mendiguren 2014, 42). And finally, urban environments are spaces where the full magnitude of the phenomenon is expressed (González Reverté 2002; Gil Álvarez 2017), which explains why analysis is conducted from the perspectives of both urban geography and economic and social geography (Pascual and others 2018).

Economic geography is the context in which we have formulated a methodological approach that originates from the Spain-based Presecal research project. The project has made it possible to establish rigorous criteria to create an operative typology of alternative economic practices with an analytical value. The typology is derived from collaborative empirical work focused on cities (Madrid, Seville, Oviedo, León, Alicante, Valladolid, Salamanca, and Zaragoza) that were selected because they represent a variety of sizes (size is measured according to the city's total population, which ranges from 3.1 million in the case of Madrid to 127,000 in the case of León), are distributed across Spain, and could be examined using qualitative techniques. These techniques are: direct observation/field work, interviews with representative agents, and surveys conducted among participants in each of the alternatives practices considered (urban garden, bartering markets, social currency, and the like).

The most important research activities focused on defining the criteria that allow alternative economic practices to be characterized. These criteria are summarized in eight aspects. Criterion 1 attempts to determine the types of organizations that lead alternative practices (conventional company; social-economy company; third-sector entity, association, a collective that is not legally constituted but is tolerated by the authorities; an entity from the informal economy). Criterion 2 covers the ownership of the assets belonging to the entity that carries out the practice (private, collective, communal, no form of ownership). Criterion 3 refers to the funding system that the practice's promoters use (conventional financial system, credit union, authorized ethical banking, public aid or subsidy, members' fees, voluntary contributions from partners and supporters, the entity's own resources, no use of money). Criterion 4 focuses on how work within the entity is remunerated (wages, annual/nonperiodic allocation, use of social currency, payment in kind, volunteer work, unpaid work). Criterion 5 covers the participation mode for production or provision of services (open and free, authorized to certain persons, limited participation that does not exceed a certain number of people). Criterion 6 establishes the mode of access to the good or service offered (free access in legal premises, free access through an associative network, restricted access). Criterion 7, refers to the means of payment (legal tender, social currency, barter, giving of free time, no charge). Finally, criterion 8 relates to the area or geographical scope in which the practice occurs (any, region, city, neighborhood, or other) (Table 3).

TABLE 3—CRITERIA FOR DEFINING ALTERNATIVE/RESILIENT ECONOMIC PRACTICES

CRITERION	OPTIONS ALONG A CONVENTIONAL-ALTERNATIVE AXIS →					
1. Organization	Profit-seeking enterprise	Social-economy enterprise	Third-sector entity	Association	Collective that is not legally constituted but is tolerated by the authorities	Informal economy
2. Ownership	Private	Collective	Communal	None		Own resources
3. Funding	Conventional financial system	Credit union	Authorized ethical banking	Public subsidy	Compulsory fees	Voluntary contribution
4. Remuneration for work	Wages in euros	Allocation in euros	nonperiodic)	Remuneration in social currency	Payment in kind (including work)	Voluntary (free)
5. Mode of participation in production/service	Free and open	participation	Participation through authorization	Participation limited by the size of the initiative		
6. Mode of access to the good/service	Free access in legal premises	Free access via associative network	Restricted access			
7. Means of payment for good/services	Legal tender	Social currency	Barter	Time	No charge	
8. Geographical scale	Any	Region	City	Neighborhood	Other	

Source: Prepared by the Presecal research team.

In the analysis of economies of this kind, which usually fall outside of official statistics and records, as was indicated above, it was possible to find a large range of practices that often varied significantly from one city to another. Analysis of them supports various options and scales. For instance, it is possible to take as a reference a single city and conduct a detailed study of all the practices identified by neighborhoods (Sánchez and others 2017) and characterized according to the criteria outlined in Table 3. Another option is to select a particular practice and examine its features and impact in a city (Sánchez 2009; Úbeda 2015; Méndez and Monteserín 2017; Climent and Lardies 2017; López-González and Benito del Pozo 2017). The third option represents a more complex analysis level: studying a group of cities with similar practices and establishing comparisons to identify trends and assess impacts. In this situation, it is preferable to select practices that are most frequent and are common to the whole set of cities. For the Spanish cities mentioned above, the Presecal project established the following repertoire of alternative economic practices:

- a. Producers' market/barter market (BM)
- b. Urban garden (UG)
- c. Cooperatives/green consumer groups (GC)
- d. Social/local currency (SC)
- e. Time bank (TB)
- f. Self-managed social center (SMSC)

In terms of analysis techniques, qualitative techniques and field work form the basis of this type of research, in view of the lack of official figures and data. This means that there is a need to generate information to arrive at reliable and comparable results. The techniques proposed are the following:

Elaboration of templates for data collection (one for each practice/AEP studied)

- Semistructured interviews, with a previously defined set of questions that aim to reveal the economic, social, psychological, and policy benefits that the AEP offers the city. Only person(s) responsible for the normal functioning of the AEP were interviewed.
- A closed questionnaire (survey) directed at people who participate as producers and as consumers/users of the AEP. Questions focused on ascertaining motivations, levels of involvement, and satisfaction levels, as well as overall assessment of the AEP.

THE CITY OF LEÓN AS A SCENE OF RESILIENT ECONOMIC PRACTICES

Within the context of Spain's urban system, the city of León is considered a medium-sized settlement based on its size (Andrés López 2008). The city has had a regressive demographic evolution since the crisis of the previous decade.

In 2009, it had a population of 135,000; by 2018, the figure had fallen to 125,000. It is also undergoing significant aging: its population of over-sixty-fives is increasing, with the proportion of people in this age range increasing from 22.6 percent in 2009 to 26.2 percent in 2018). The city's functional profile is one of specialization in service activities, and the public sector (administration, education, and health) and hospitality sector (in the context of an expanding tourist industry) are major employers. León has a high unemployment rate, which grew between 2009 and 2013 (from 9,000 people out of work to 13,000). There was a change in trend from 2014, with unemployment falling to 8,000 persons in 2018.

Before we address the urban scale in the case of León city (the capital of the province of León; the city has a conservative sociopolitical profile), it is important to consider the regional framework in which alternative economic practices operate in Castilla y León (a region in northern Spain). These practices are a recent phenomenon whose reference point is a network created in 2000 and called *REAS Castilla y León*. This network aims to bring together a set of pioneering experiments with a solidarity economy in order to disseminate, raise awareness of, promote, and organize alternative-economy activities guided by the idea that "sustainable development is only possible by combining social, environmental, and economic justice" (http://www.economiasolidaria.org/redes/reas_castilla_leon). The network has a low density: it comprises only ten entities, of which only one, EcoAlternative.NET, is located in León. This is a symptom of the nascent character of the phenomenon, but it also suggests that there are organizational structures that attempt to combine efforts and work collectively and in a coordinated manner to promote solidarity-based-economy principles and actions.

On an urban scale, field work aimed at identifying and precisely locating the different practices that could be significant in León led to an exploration of all activities that, in theory, presented some characteristic feature of a resilient practice according to the criteria described above. The results obtained are shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4—ENTITIES IN LEÓN WITH ACTIVITIES THAT HAVE SOME AEP ATTRIBUTE

TYPE OF ENTITY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Association	39	50.6
Producers'/bartering market	6	7.8
Fair trade	5	6.5
Urban garden	2	2.6
Neighborhood association	25	32.5
TOTAL	77	100

Source: Prepared by the author.

It can be seen, first of all, that out of a total of 77 entities, most (83 percent) 385 are associations (associations in general and neighborhood associations), a very heterogeneous category composed of entities that, apart from a few exceptions, would need to be discarded at a later phase of the analysis because they do not fully conform to the specified criteria. Six flea markets that are similar to the 390 concept of producers'/bartering markets were counted (7.8 percent), though fewer than half met the AEP criteria. Fair trade is represented by five entities (6.5 percent of the total), and there are two urban gardens. The latter type of activity had the lowest level of presence in the city, and it is driven by a public entity, León's local council. It is more social than productive in nature, although 395 in times of crisis, marginal urban agriculture practiced by retirees and the unemployed fulfills a clear economic function.

The first filter, resulting from applying the criteria in Table 3, generated the following repertoire of entities that are fully in line with the criteria that define alternative or resilient economic practices in the city of León (Figure 1), and it reduced the set of relevant cases to a total of six entities (Table 5). It should be 400 highlighted that most entities from the alternative economy predate the economic crisis. Only two, El Candil and Mundo Ético, were created during the period of recession. That said, surveys of those in charge of these entities reveal that number of members and their involvement in the organization increased significantly between 2009 and 2016, as did the flows generated and the socio- 405 economic impact of each of the AEPs, whose activities and projection increased. Although the economic crisis strengthened the alternative economy phenomenon, it did not do so sufficiently to change the city's economic model; its influence was limited to small collectives that have a weak impact on the urban economy's indicators. 410

Table 6 shows the strong engagement of the managers and those in charge of the six alternative entities studied here. They all responded to most of the questions asked, which focused on a wide range of issues. Consumer groups, urban gardens, bartering markets, and self-managed social centers were asked about: (a) the origins and motives of the activity, the number of members, the 415 influence of the crisis, and the organizational model and initial objectives; (b) the evolution of the entity, the location of its activities, and relations with other alternative entities and public entities; (c) the types of goods/services offered, providers and distributors, and price policy; (d) the management model, members' involvement, funding, commercial channels, and payment systems; (e) 420 profits made from the activity, socioeconomic impact, and knowledge of and relations with AEPs; (f) perspectives on the future.

The results show that the phenomenon of urban resilience, focused on in terms of the emergence of new economic forms in the city, in which producers and consumers make the choice to place themselves outside the market's 425 conventional channels, has only a small presence and impact in a city such as

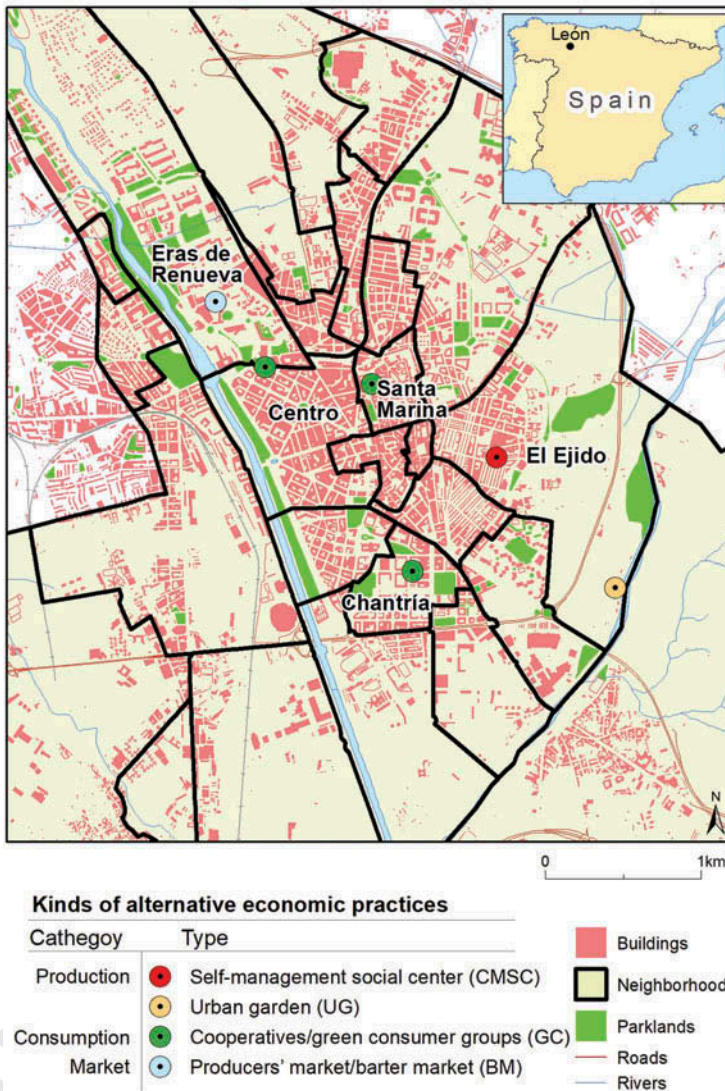


FIG. 1.—Location of alternative/resilient economic practices in the city of León-SpainSource: Prepared by the author.

León, which is a small-to-medium city whose population is decreasing overall, exhibits strong demographic aging, is conservative in political terms, and refractory to change in social aspects, though it suffered just as other Spanish cities did as a result of the 2008 crisis. From a descriptive standpoint, on the city level, these entities are dispersed to a significant degree, although both the downtown area and the neighborhoods that border it participate in this unique geography of resilience, in which the Bernesga River seems to act as a barrier

TABLE 5—ALTERNATIVE/RESILIENT ECONOMIC PRACTICES IN LEÓN

NAME GIVEN TO THE ENTITY	TYPE OF PRACTICE	YEAR	
		OF CREATION	NO. INVOLVED
El Candil	SMSC	2014	10
Equitanea-Asociación la Semilla	GC	1998	90
La Cesta Biológica	GC	2002	1
Mundo Ético	GC	2012	100
La Candamia	UG	1995	175
Mercado de Gelete	BM	1987	Not known

Source: Prepared by the author.

TABLE 6—REPLIES OBTAINED FROM INTERVIEWS WITH MANAGERS OF ALTERNATIVE ENTITIES IN LEÓN

ENTITY	DATE	INTERVIEWEE'S ROLE	QUESTIONS/
			ANSWERS/RATIO
El Candil	12/03/2018	Manager	32/30/0.9375
Equitanea-Asociación la Semilla	20/09/2017	Manager	35/35/1.0000
La Cesta Biológica	06/09/2017	Manager	35/26/0.7429
Mundo Ético	23/08/2017	Manager	35/35/1.0000
La Candamia	05/09/2017	Manager	42/41/0.9762
Mercado de Gelete	12/09/2017	Manager	34/33/0.9706

Source: Prepared by the author.

whose effect will be studied and explained at a more advanced stage of the investigation. To be sure, the city's productive base has not changed owing to this phenomenon, which is small in scope and rather anecdotal in León, although it is expressive of the trend observed in other Spanish cities toward a breakthrough of economic practices of this type, which become consolidated in the postcrisis stage. 435

Demonstrative of the interest that these social or resilient economic practices elicit are the efforts of various entities of León— The Unión Leonesa de Cooperativas, The Coordinadora Red Economía Alternativa and Solidaria de Castilla y León, and the Asociación por el Fomento de la Economía por el Bien Común—to develop a catalog of priorities for the next four years within the area of alternative economies. This should be conveyed to society and all political parties, and it should contain the concrete proposals for municipal managers that are embodied in a document titled *Otra economía*, which calls for an economic model based on sustainable economic activities as a means for achieving social objectives (see http://www.diariodeleon.es/noticias/afondo/mas-350-emprendedores-van-alternativa_986866.html). 440 445 450

In this line of active commitment, the University of León has also become involved with initiatives such as opening its doors to four marketing and market

research students who since 2016 have been organizing the Second Market, which is held during International University Week and is a second-hand-clothing barter market with a social purpose. 455

Finally, social and institutional commitment extends to León's city council, which is behind two spaces for urban gardens in the city and a series of actions aimed at giving content to the Healthy Cities international program, which is founded on an approach based on sustainability and quality of life for citizens and includes practices that are considered to be alternative (WHO 2016). 460

CONCLUSIONS

We have demonstrated that there is a close relationship between phenomena and processes of sustainable urban development, social economy, urban resilience, and alternative economic practices. The specialist literature and recent empirical studies of different urban contexts have facilitated this outcome. 465

Although the city of León has socio-demographic indicators that *a priori* disincentivize practices of this type (overall decline in population, emigration of young people, significant aging, a conventional lifestyle, and political conservatism), the economic crisis reactivated the preexisting entities of the alternative economy and encouraged the appearance of further ones. The number of people involved in this phenomenon grew, and the flows generated by alternative practices brought about partial solutions to problems associated with resource scarcity and unemployment. At the same time, discourses on sustainability and responsible consumption became more powerful. 475

We have confirmed that the alternative economic practices analyzed in the case of León have not altered the bases of the urban market economy, and nor have they transformed social structures or typically capitalist productive relations. But they have improved perceptions of the most marginalized and idealistic groups with respect to their own lives and opportunities, as within the communities of the alternative economy, individuals have found a channel for solving life's difficulties and dignifiedly resisting the shocks of the most acute phase of the economic crisis. There is an element of idealism or philosophy of the alternative that inspires the spirit of these businesses. This can be deduced from the responses given by the entities' managers to our study's survey. These are entities that, in general, aspire to serve as models for the third sector or the alternative economy. However, their reach is very marginal and almost anecdotal. AEPs' power to transform and change things is very limited in contexts such as that of the city of León, a conclusion that could be extrapolated to other cities with similar sizes and socioeconomic profiles. 480 485 490

From a methodological standpoint, in this study we have managed to establish an analytical framework and criteria that make possible a rigorous in-depth exploration of the phenomenon of alternative economic practices, the

establishment of comparisons, and the drawing of conclusions that are valuable for urban governance. Lastly, our case study demonstrates that it is possible to identify and characterize urban resilience in cities where its scope is limited and scarce, owing to the fact that nothing escapes analysis techniques that explore the city on an in-depth basis and seek expressions that reveal the validity of a phenomenon that can be extrapolated and has greater dimensions in other urban contexts. It is clear that there is a social sensitivity for practices of this type of urban resilience that humanize market relations, both from the point of view of consumption and from that of production and citizens' coexistence.

Future lines of research that could explore the phenomenon of AEP in urban contexts might examine the following in greater depth: the impact that these practices can have in the urban microeconomy; their likely impact on the social aspects of neighborhoods (relations between neighbors, support groups, and dissemination); and their possible influence on the governance of the city.

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