

The social and solidarity economy and the crisis: Simply resist or change?

Danièle Demoustier and Gabriel Colletis

Understanding the changing role and place of the social and solidarity economy in the current crisis requires a double shift in perspective. On one hand, this involves combining an approach that views the current crisis as a change in market conditions and an approach that considers the crisis as structural. On the other hand, this involves using an institutionalist approach to complement the traditional analysis of the social and solidarity economy enterprise as a combination of an association and a firm. This holistic approach allows us to identify the social and solidarity economy enterprise as a social construct that creates specific values, norms and rules and thus as an agent of socio-economic regulation.

Organizational change in the social and solidarity economy

Nadine Richez-Battesti and Marie-Claire Malo

With the capitalist economy in crisis and increasing competition, there is growing pressure on social and solidarity economy organizations to become more efficient. What kinds of organizational change and processes are occurring as a result of this need for greater efficiency? Integrated groups by sector? Pooling of resources? More stakeholders? Stronger local links? We identify three types of organizational change. The main objective remains responding to competition, but it is combined with the secondary objectives of greater integration/concentration and diversification of subsidiaries to increase growth, pooling of resources to preserve independence, and broadening the stakeholder base to provide better relational services.

The social and solidarity economy and local communities: A perfect match?

Bernard Pecqueur and Xabier Itçaina

Like democratic management and economic solidarity, local embeddedness is one of the main features of the social and solidarity economy.

Far from arguing that the social and solidarity economy is naturally embedded in the community, we propose to bring the observed dynamics of the social and solidarity economy back into the complementarity, cooperation or competition specific to the processes of territorial constructions. The role of the social and solidarity economy in the global transformation of the coordination of territorial productive systems is then examined. Two lines of research concerning the social and solidarity economy and territorial governance are presented. The first concerns the institutionalisation of the social and solidarity economy as a sector of local community action. The second questions the premise that the horizontal and territorial transformation of local community action and the declared objectives of the social and solidarity economy are perfectly compatible.

The social and solidarity economy and poverty reduction in local communities: The Quebec case

Juan-Luis Klein

This article examines the role of local initiatives using social and solidarity economy resources in the fight against poverty and exclusion in Quebec. The article is divided into four sections. The first section presents the community initiative and collective action development model used for the analysis. The second section presents the case study of an organization that has set up several types of projects aimed at improving living conditions for an ethnic group that has a sizeable population in Montreal. This case shows that collective action develops community ties socially. The third section summarises the factors for success of local initiatives supported by the social and solidarity economy that are trying to help disadvantaged communities. In the conclusion, it is argued that the social and solidarity economy has to maintain a strong but flexible relationship with public institutions. It has to call upon a large range of resources and implement hybridization strategies combining

local and supra-local networks, endogenous and exogenous resources, and social and public organizations.

A national policy or a patchwork of measures on the social and solidarity economy? Thirty years of political and administrative trial and error

Scarlett Wilson-Courvoisier

France has no national policy on the social and solidarity economy. For there to be a national policy, there has to be the recognition of the need to create one and the political will to pursue it, without forgetting to equip it with the necessary and adequate means to be effective and applicable to everyone. Do these conditions exist in France? To answer the question, we have to look at the institutional relationship between the social and solidarity economy and government in the recent past, at the difficulty of putting the aim of the social and solidarity economy into public policy, from the creation of the Délégation interministérielle à l'économie sociale (DIES) to the Vercamer Report (*section I*), and at the various underlying notions about its scope and where it belongs in government, as reflected in the various laws and acts that concern the sector (*section II*). From this analysis, it appears that since 1991 the social

economy has never been considered as a whole. Its fragmentation probably partly explains the change in the relationship between the social and solidarity economy and government over the past thirty years from joint management to competition (*section III*).

What history for our cooperatives? The case of the cooperatives in Savoy

Alain Mélo

The history of cooperative movements and cooperatives remains the poor relation of the historiography of social movements, particularly in France. Universities and research centres are more interested in economics and the current sociology of these enterprise forms than in their history. Practitioners in the movement itself continually repeat the (useful) myths that earlier authors had already created in the 19th century. It is true, however, that archives are missing or rather are not clearly identified and promoted among researchers. The new opening of the archives of the Union des coopérateurs de Haute-Savoie provides an opportunity to return to the issue of the construction of the history of the various movements in the social economy, a history (or memory) that has become essential for ensuring the transmission of core values. ●