ISSN: 2247-6172, ISSN - L: 2247-6172
Review of Applied Socio- Economic Research
(Volume 18, Issue 2/ 2019), pp. 43-57
URL: http://www.reaser.eu
e-mail: editors@reaser.eu

The Social Solidarity Economy: Discerning its Theory to Accommodate the Commons

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Abstract. *The objective of this paper is to understand how the theory of commons fits within the notion of the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) as a new transformative phase for our economy today. Since the current phase of capitalism faces both a major ecological and socio-economic crisis, it is important to see how SSE, guided by the commons, can help the world's population cope with this crisis. But in order to make that argument, a theoretical analysis of SSE and the commons is required. Thus, this paper provides an analytical framework of SSE by dissecting thee terms 'social' and 'solidarity' and even the 'third' sector. This analytical framework will help identify in what contexts commons can play a fundamental role in strengthening SSE capacities on all economic fronts. As such, this paper will highlight the evolution of the theory of the commons, which will then lead to a discussion on how the commons can lead to the transformative phase of SSE as we face this capitalist crisis.*

Keywords: Civil Society, Collective Action, Commons, Cooperatives, Social Economy, Solidarity Economy

JEL Codes: O

1. Introduction

The onset of the 21st century is marked by an unfolding capitalistic crisis that will deepen over time as exogenous forces like rapid urbanization and climate change intensify the pace and scope of destabilization. Forms of governance and leadership that we have designed to address this crisis have so far provided few solutions. And given our inability to solve problems leading to climate catastrophe or socioeconomic unrest, our societies are increasingly in need of effective leadership and governance. Many scholars have, in this context, pointed to the potential of the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) as being our best hope. SSE remains a loose federation of concepts, and scholars have struggled to provide a theoretical framework that would allow SSE to adapt to our economy in a decisive fashion. Given the potential SSE has to be a concrete economic phenomenon able to reshape our capitalistic structure, it is important to keep its evolution flowing. Several elements of SSE correspond to the notion of an alternative economic structure capable of restructuring our economy so that it may deal more effectively with the ecological and socio-economic challenges we face now and in the future.

This paper aims to further our understanding of SSE as a notion capable of transforming our economy into an ecologically sound and socio-economically beneficial economic system; a third sector interjected between market and state to operate where both of those spheres fail while also making each better in their interactions with each other. This requires us to provide a solid and coherent theoretical framework to help

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ISSN: 2247-6172, ISSN - L: 2247-6172
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(Volume 18, Issue 2/ 2019), pp. 43-57
URL: http://www.reaser.eu
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ground the emergence of SSE as a major player in our economy going forward. Towards that objective we shall reconstruct the theory of SSE using its key notions of "social" and "solidarity" to discuss how SSE can be implemented as a third player of the economy between market and state, a prospect much enhanced by the proper integration of the commons into the SSE framework to boost the latter's transformative qualities.

2. The "Social" and "Solidarity" in SSE

The notion of SSE is a merger of two separate concepts, each with its own definition and presence in today's economy. The "social" economy is a much older concept which emerged even before the domination of capitalism. The first recorded definition of social economy comes from Charles Dunoyer (1830), a French scholar and activist who defined it as a network of cooperatives and mutual associations financially helping workers and consumers pay patronage dividends and pool enough income from every participant to invest in housing, fair distribution, and addressing domestic and social conditions of each implicated body. The term 'social' refers here to equally distributed ownership by individuals, not strictly confined to shareholders (Poirier 2014). It is one of the first democratic approaches within an organization to consolidate a "one person, one vote" policy, emphasizing equal rights in the decision making of collective projects like shared housing and shared the land. This definition was crucially refined by the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers in the United Kingdom in 1844, the first known consumer cooperative of its kind. We shall return to that organization's so-called "Rochdale Principles" in their contemporary version put forth by the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) when discussing the integration of cooperatives and commons.

Since then, the social economy has specifically referred to the economic activities of cooperatives, mutual associations, and similar types of self-help organizations. The aim of the social economy was to have different disadvantaged groups of workers merge together collectively to deal with widespread and growing misery that came with an increasingly dominant and brutal wave of capitalism. The next evolution of the definition was highlighted by Felipe Lorda Alaiz, who was an anarchist in Barcelona fighting against the royal kingdom of Spain during the Civil War of the 1930s. He wrote a manifesto in 1937, encouraging the merger of worker cooperatives residing in both rural and urban areas. Such a merger would help bridge the discrepancies between workers in rural zones and workers in urban zones, thereby fortifying the strength of the movement in opposition to the unjust policies imposed by the fascist Franco regime, which had come to power in the wake of a bloody civil war. While Lorda Aliaz's manifesto was successful in making workers suffering from the war unite among each other, his work was suppressed and ultimately sidelined by Franco's regime at the peak of its powers.

These historical examples make clear that the social economy's objective is to improve the quality of life and well-being of the working population by augmenting certain social and readily available services that help the disadvantaged deal with economic hardship. Amidst the brutal working conditions of the factory system taking root during the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century, socially committed citizens created cooperatives and associations to counterbalance the stresses of their paying jobs – through charity, collective action, mutual help. While there were active social movements against overly exploitative worker conditions, cooperatives aimed to address issues of housing and food.

It is worth mentioning in this context the emergence of "Associationalism" as a political movement of the late 19th and early 20th century-spanning Europe as well as North America. This movement, as represented most notably by Alexis De Tocqueville and Emile Durkheim in France or by Theodore Roosevelt (US

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President from 1901 to 1908) in the United States, pushed the idea of an "associative democracy" comprising self-governing associations which together constitute a vibrant pluralism of mutuals and cooperatives all set in contradistinction to the two dominant ideologies of governance shaping that period – laissez-faire liberalism and state-centered collectivism. This important movement provided in crucial moments further momentum for the development of the social economy in Europe and North America.[1]

Yvon Poirier (2014), summarizing the aforementioned Rochdale Principles as updated by the ICA in 1995, identifies seven themes of the social economy based on actors, notably being cooperatives and mutual associations, and their actions. The themes are (1) voluntary and open membership, (2) democratic member control, (3) member participation, (4) autonomy and independence (from authoritative figures), (5) education and training information, (6) cooperation among cooperatives, and (7) community concerns. According to Poirier (2014), social returns are evaluated in terms of how actors and organizations of the social economy contribute to democratic development.[2]

The "solidarity" economy is a concept that emerged much later when different economic growth models were being experimented in for social purpose rather than for sheer profit gains. The solidarity economy is often interpreted as an alternative to the capitalistic growth model in which it is still possible for an organization to gain profits, but only under the condition of pursuing, at the same time also a social or an environmental purpose. Poirier (2014) would describe it as a firm that has a strong social mission. What appeared from this understanding of the solidarity economy is the birth of the social enterprise. Such an enterprise would be forged in a social or collective way in order to have a productivity based on social output. Development and financial viability would be based on a more locally endogenous way, directly benefitting surrounding citizens in their pursuit of better environmental equality and a social paradigm that is inclusive of all.

A key example in the evolution of the solidarity economy occurred in Colombia through a scholar named Jorge Schoster, who helped launch the movement of 'cooperativism' during the 1980s. He defined cooperativism as a sector with diverse enterprises that share common rationality based on cooperation, mutualism, and solidarity. This network of enterprises was based on joint-ownership, where citizens become key stakeholders of a social enterprise's project, with an emphasis on democratic control. The values of social enterprises reflected self-help, self-responsibility, equality, equity, democracy, and above all, solidarity.

Chile was another nation that evoked the economy of solidarity and cooperativism as a key economic player. Luiz Razeto, an academic expert on the economy of solidarity, defined cooperativism in 1984 as an ensemble of diverse social enterprises whose rationality is focused on cooperation and solidarity for socially useful projects. These socially useful projects would serve as a model of economic transformation centered on strengthening an alternative economy based on a model of solidarity. His work brought a lot of international attention to create a global network of solidarity economies.

[1] For a historical account of associationism as a political movement and how it has fed the 'social economy" in Europe and the United States, see J. Cohen & J. Rogers (1995) as well as L. B. Kaspersen & L. Ottesen (2001).

[2] The ICA principles for cooperatives mentioned by Y. Poirot (2014), as the guiding criteria for the social economy, are also discussed in more detail in http://www.msvu.ca/socialeconomyatlantic/pdfs/DefiningSocialEconomy_FnlJan1906.pdf.

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In France, a non-profit organization called Réseau d'Économie Alternative et Solidaire (REAS) was born in 1991, and it was created by a merger between the Liaison Agency for the Development of the Alternative Economy (ALDEA) and Solidarité Emploi, two associations that focused both on expanding and strengthening worker rights in the solidarity economy while promoting socially useful projects. REAS then focused on developing a network of various social businesses by investing in employee training for unemployed youth, promotion of "fair trade" sales, and the creation of an incubator that would become small hub businesses through micro-credit activities. They went bankrupt in 1998, but they created the grounds for a stronger solidarity economy in France, while REAS still remains active in Spain.

In 1997, Latin American and European communities assembled the first international meeting for the globalization of solidarity in Peru that was made up of about 275 participants who passed the "Lima Declaration."[3] This meeting's main objective was to transform the economy of solidarity into a global project, with several groups from the social economy (such as cooperatives and mutual associations) being recognized as major contributors to this larger global movement. The groups' emphasis on combating the predatory aspects of capitalism and its threats to communities, as well as the environment, sent a clear message on what role the solidarity economy should play in the world today. Collective sharing and action were at the crux of this economic development model. Such efforts by solidarity economy actors to collaborate and integrate various definitions and perspectives from different countries gave birth to a truly international movement that addresses and unites different forms of a social economy and a solidarity economy. This international movement became later known as the Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of Social and Solidarity (RIPESS). This was also the first major and global attempt to merge the Social Economy and the Solidarity Economy together, creating a new alternative economy known as the Social Solidarity Economy (SSE). Until today, RIPESS is the largest organization that represents SSE in the world, and the work created by RIPESS provides the most extensive overview of concepts and terms that define SSE today.[4]

Before explaining all the intricate nodes of SSE, it is important to explore the concepts of the social economy and the solidarity economy to see how SSE managed to become a unified model for alternative economies today. The Social Economy is based on social development, while the Solidarity Economy is based on economic development. In social development, there is a strong emphasis on building a system of social protection and the empowerment of citizens to do problem-solving activities from the ground up (Poirier 2014). In economic development, the emphasis is on an alternative growth model which confronts the neoliberal "free market" policies by highlighting their destructive effects on communities and the environment. While the model is based on growth, the true purpose of gaining income in this domain is by helping the population adapt to crises and solve environmental as well as socio-economic problems.

The social economy's principal objective is to achieve and receive social returns, which in this case, are evaluated by contributions to the development of a proper democracy, where everyone counts in the decision-making processes of an economy and its social system. These social returns are based on the

[3] References to key early figures promoting the "social" economy or the "solidarity" economy come from Y. Poirier (2014). For the Lima Declaration of 1997, see http://www.ripess.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/declaration_lima1997_EN.pdf.
[4] RIPESS, the French acronym for the Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of the Social Solidarity Economy, has a useful web site accounting for the key historic moments in the global propagation of the SSE. See http://www.ripess.org/who-are-we/history/?lang=en

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empowerment of citizenship while promoting individual well-being through collective initiatives. The solidarity economy's focus is on social innovation, based on experts and practitioners who emphasize processes based on trial and error, learning by doing, democratic representation of opinion, and exchange of socially useful ideas. As such, the solidarity economy enables citizens and economic actors to pursue innovative responses to problems, needs, and social demands designed and initiated by a network of alternative economy actors, all working in solidarity together (Poirier 2014). While the social economy consists of cooperatives and mutual-aid associations, the solidarity economy consists of social businesses and enterprises. Both of these actors working together leads to an economy that provides social returns through social innovation, and this becomes far more within reach when you combine the Social Economy and Solidarity Economy. At a time when we face a capitalist crisis, SSE can be a major factor in addressing this crisis, and that is why networks like RIPESS deserve more credibility and attention than ever before today.[5]

3. The "Social Solidarity Economy" as a Third Player in Capitalist Economies

Taking elements of the social economy, solidarity economy, and the third sector, we can propose a more grounded approach to SSE theory that makes it a viable third player between market and state. We can now reconstruct the theory of SSE through such a dissection of the terminology. By doing this, we can identify a pluralist approach, an approach that is not confined to one grounded method or objective but instead proposes a host of many methods and objectives. We can also identify the similarities of each method and theory that render SSE theory more consistent, unified, and legitimate.

We can argue that SSE is the main champion of civil society, precisely because it is an entire sphere that is distinct from the market and state. Actors of the social economy, the solidarity economy, and the third sector all belong to an organized civil society because they influence the configuration of public space through innovations and dissensions that manage to express public space and socio-economic production (Laville 2010). Our de- and reconstruction of the SSE theory evokes this point precisely, and we can now claim that SSE's main objective is to contribute to the growth and proper management of a civil society which responds especially to socio-economic and environmental needs. By highlighting that SSE is the major contributor to civil society, we can now ascertain some key conclusions at the heart of SSE theory.

For one, we can confirm that SSE serves as a unified proposal for an alternative economic development model based on inclusion and sustainability to address local issues affecting human lives, which predatory capitalism imposes on our communities across the globe. Such local issues must then be addressed at the global level because the local issues resonate globally. In other words, SSE responds to a global crisis of human neglect caused by an unchecked economic system of capitalism tilted in favor of the top 1% and the giant corporations they shape. Thus, SSE should be viewed as a vitally important social and economic transformation based on the values of justice, equality, freedom, and solidarity, terms that reflect the purpose of civil society today. Laville (2010) provides his own definition that reflects these thoughts exactly. He defines SSE as a "sphere of transnational activities and relations created by collective actors, such as social

[5] According to J.-L. Laville (2010) and Y. Poirot (2014), the full sphere of SSE would also include a "civil society" (or "third") sector comprising non-governmental organizations (NGOs), advocacy campaigns, and formal as well as informal social movements across the world to push for a unified global system of civil society for the promotion of human and environmental health in a more equitable fashion. And arguably, one may, in addition, also include in the SSE so-called ZADism (from the French "zone à defendre") consisting of environmental activists mobilizing against construction and infrastructure projects who also represent an alternative "back-to-nature" lifestyle.

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movements and civil society networks and organizations, that are independent of governments and private companies functioning outside of the state and the market." Michael Walzer (2000) defines SSE as actions taken by institutions of civil society to provide a more just world to all. □

As Laville (2010) evokes, SSE becomes a robust process aimed at converging pursuits of various forms with one essential goal, namely to strengthen civil society and the overall empowerment of citizens. Lionel Prouteau (2003) emphasizes the wide range of actors involved in the mobilization of the SSE, such as citizens in general, community groups, social groups, environmental groups, native and indigenous populations, businesses, NGOs, public institutions, religious institutions, intellectuals, and even academic institutions.

Peter Utting (2015) shows that such convergences of various initiatives pushed by the different SSE actors can enable associative forms, leading to the creation of juridical and legal norms. This can have a huge impact on SSE's influence over today's economy. The question is, how does such creation of juridical and legal norms look like when SSE is applied in today's economy? So far, such juridical norms have been advocated through the establishment of guiding principles and economic proposals, notably in the form of charters. But these guiding principles are presented as the "must be" of economic proposals. As such, juridical and legal norms are able to dictate how each actor, despite the variety in form, can work together, participate in experiences of organization, make collective decisions, and smoothly adapt to function in their local environments with the legal support and participation of municipalities. Many charters created by SSE entities have already done this successfully.

4. Integrating Cooperatives and Commons

Much of the recent push in the evolution and expansion of SSE in recent years has come from the "civil society" sector of NGOs. Lately, we have also witnessed the proliferation of social enterprises, as exemplified by so-called "public benefit" corporations in the United States or "social integration" enterprises in the European Union. Still, given the difficult aftermath following the global crisis of 2007-2012 and the new challenges to be faced since then – climate change, mass migration, growing inequality, declining public services, et cetera – the SSE sector has not made enough progress to match the intensification of socio-economic and environmental problems imposed by a crisis-ridden capitalist system. We thus need to figure out new strategies to reinforce SSE so that it can better address these problems. One idea is to capture the burgeoning movement of commons and reinsert it into the SSE by linking commons to cooperatives. I shall argue here that the two are tailor-made institutional complements which, when appropriately put together, can yield a powerful new institutional thrust around which to mobilize new layers of SSE.

In the past, cooperatives were used to provide members alternative solutions to the undesirable working conditions brought by firms that followed a capitalistic model. It was a way for workers to confront abusive or unsustainable working conditions. Their emergence on a large scale coincided with the spread of the Industrial Revolution across Europe and North America, in particular, Britain and France. Apart from cooperatively organized producers, there were also consumer cooperatives providing necessities (such as food) affordably to the local communities in which they were embedded as well as cooperative-type financial institutions, known in the United States as credit unions. While cooperatives were at best only a fairly marginal alternative model to the profit-driven companies because of their dependence on the market mechanism, they have now for two centuries had a significant local presence in many different countries.

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Co-operatives have provided concrete examples for better approaches to production or consumption or finance than those profit-driven and/or self-interested actors following the logic of predatory capitalism. Most importantly, cooperatives provide an extension of democratic decision-making principles to the economic sphere and, thus, important lessons for governance.

At the same time, we have recently seen a renaissance concerning the spread of commons – from knowledge commons (like Wikipedia) to creative commons licenses to urban commons (e.g., community gardens). The commons might emerge as a pioneering phase for SSE's establishment in the global economy. Its forms of collective governance made by communities responsible for creating, managing, and preserving the commons are defined by a bottom-up approach that pursues localized global governance inasmuch as commons seek to establish a tangible presence in local communities while at the same time establishing inter-nodal linkages and pursuing a widely accepted charter of rules. It is this unique dual local-global dimension of governance which may enhance the ability of SSE to influence our current phase of capitalism towards one based on the societal needs of the whole population.[6]

It is important to understand the subtle differences between commons and cooperatives. While commons try to define themselves as an economic player, they are not inherently economic in the first place. Located in essence, outside the economic sphere, they do not produce resources for the market. Without producing capital and without commodifying resources, commons produce resources outside of any market intervention. They provide for communities without the flow of capital. Their institutional arrangements for management are pursued outside of any market transaction and without the implementation of any market entity. Commons are produced on the basis of communities' needs, so they have no role in the exchange of goods and services based on a price determined by market forces. Precisely to the extent that they do not become captured by market incentives or commodified by the market, commons are a promising way to override the predatory behaviors of capitalism. They may transform capitalism and address the challenges we endure today in the face of that system's multi-faceted systemic crisis of social inequality, financial instability, and environmental degradation. To counter the destructive forces of capitalism, scholars argue that we need a new economic system centered around the commons, especially when it comes to ecological and socio-economic needs.[7]

Cooperatives, by contrast, are economic players that provide people with needs and services, whereas commons are based on the resource itself and how that resource can be maintained, produced, and governed through collective action. Cooperatives have the potential to set an example of what a fair and equitable SSE model would look like. My argument is that cooperatives would be more likely to realize that potential, so crucial to the future of a thriving SSE sector if they were capable of integrating with commons to form a complementary new form of social agency.

There are major similarities between the aforementioned seven principles guiding cooperatives, as put forward by the International Cooperative Alliance's (ICA) in 1995, and the eight so-called "design principles of stable local common pool resource management" specified by Elinor Ostrom (1990), as well as the co-city model specified for urban commons by Sheila Foster and Christian Iaione (2016). Their respective overlaps

[6] Aspects of the localized global governance dimension incorporated by commons are discussed in T. O. Randhir (2016) as well as S. Cogolati & J. Wouters (2018).
[7] Among those who have argued for commons at the center of a new economic system, I want to point in particular to the important contributions in B. Coriat (2015) as well as M. Bauwens and V. Niaros (2017).

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suggest making both cooperatives and commons conducive to working together so as to help build an SSE model that can contain the predatory practices of capitalism and balance the inequalities created by capitalism.

We can use the ICA principles in conjunction with Ostrom's principles as a guide for cooperatives to support and produce commons while protecting both commons and cooperatives from actors who seek to use commons as financial leverage for individual capital gains. One the one hand, cooperatives can use commons to become real actors that help communities thrive and attain key resources in an ethical and ecological manner. On the other hand, commons can use cooperatives to establish themselves as economic actors that are institutionalized to provide communities with capital gains. Such a dynamic would produce income and employment opportunities for commoners, who would then become members of a cooperative as a form of alternative labor (outside of the formal labor market).

To conclude, a fusion between commons and cooperatives can build a stronger SSE for combatting the forces of climate change. This fusion can create a trading scheme that allows commons to produce for its community and be compensated through common capital flows help by cooperatives' members. Capital would, therefore, be produced in a fair, ethical, and just manner for the benefit of the community. Such a dynamic between an influx of shared resources and capital gains that are commonly owned and managed can increase the longevity of both parties (cooperative and commons). It can create a sustainable economic model for commons to be institutionalized as an economic entity, and it allows cooperatives to get closer to their goal in providing social and ecological needs to members of a community. It is important to observe the principles that define both cooperatives and commons through their objectives and functions in order to see if such an institutional and economical fusion is possible.

5. ICA Principles for Cooperatives and Ostrom’s Principles for Commons

The first ICA principle governs the "voluntary and open membership" of cooperatives, which are user-driven and established according to members' economic, social, and cultural needs. The creation of cooperatives and the acceptance of members' rights and freedoms are both protected by law. There are no restrictions on entry, and anybody can become a member as they wish. Members serve as beneficiaries of their economic activity, but also assume losses when such circumstances present themselves. They must also follow a code of conduct and responsibilities, which includes an element of ethical behavior that every member accepts and follows. Roles and responsibilities should be decided democratically but can also be determined by the skills each member possesses. Cooperatives are democratically organized, rooted in a "one member, one vote" policy rule. They have a duty of providing innovative participative mechanisms to attract more members. Such innovative mechanisms often include electronic participation, voting in general assembly meetings, and training programs to encourage minorities to become members and get involved in the decision-making process of a cooperative. It is important for cooperatives to take advantage of technological capacities that exist today, particularly mobile and internet communication strategies that would enable members to engage actively in democratic processes. Democratic member control also implies that cooperatives and their decision-making processes are openly accessible and transparent.

This ICA principle coincides with Ostrom’s second principle of collective choice arrangements. The collective choice arrangements that Ostrom describes are a tool to ensure collective action and participation in a commons’ production and distribution of its shared resources. It unifies commoners and so enables them

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to work together to achieve a shared interest. Each collective choice arrangement can allow commoners to ensure their role as a functioning member of that shared resource while allowing each commoner to reap the benefits of participation in an equitable fashion. This is done by commoners who take in the externalities that are indirectly produced by collective participation. Collective choice arrangements are also procured to avoid the problem of free-riding.

Both interpretations of democratic control are essential for the integrity and functioning of cooperatives and commons under a single organizational roof. Both entities can learn from each other to build upon membership and ensure that both commoners and members of a cooperative have full access to participation. One can even say that members of a cooperative who see themselves as commoners of a shared resource can participate and distribute innovative learning and participating mechanisms on both fronts, to ensure that the cooperative is a rule-abiding stakeholder of a commons.

While cooperatives promote open membership, they can be subject to failure if members do not each do their part. If a cooperative cannot effectively address issues of "free-riding" by members, it will fail in achieving sustainability towards reaching its stated social goals. According to Ostrom, commoners have effective ways of detecting which commoners free-ride from access and use of the commons. Such effective ways are defined by the fifth principle governing Ostrom's institutional arrangements, which is to develop a system carried out by commoners for monitoring members' behavior. Those carrying out the monitoring mechanism are strictly members of the community using the shared resource. Such monitoring systems aim to identify those commoners that are not complying with the rules of the community and thus deliberately free-riding as a means to gain access to the resource without doing their share. Once such behaviors are detected, enforcement mechanisms can be put into effect to address such identified situations of free-riding.

Ostrom's sixth principle, which concerns the use of graduated sanctions for rule violators, can also help cooperatives in assuring the roles of responsibilities by each member of a cooperative. Principle 6 is designed to prevent community members of a shared resource from committing violations. Members will feel the need to avoid such violations if they want to continue having access to the shared resource. This same logic can be applied to a cooperative. Cooperatives need their members to do their fair share, and they may, therefore, need to adapt this principle to maintain the integrity of the cooperative's activities. Ostrom's principle six can be especially effective in assuring that the cooperative functions in a manner that does not lead to failure.

As cooperatives grow in the capital and offer greater economic benefits, members have an inherent duty to accept this capital accumulation as the common property of the cooperative. It should be noted that a cooperative's capacity to grow economically can only come from members who financially contribute to an equitable member. Democratic control reinforces the fact that members should not assume their responsibilities for individual gain or control. Instead, members should be individually allocating surpluses for the sake of developing the cooperative, setting up reserves for the cooperative, and benefiting from transactions that are in proportion to what they have contributed. Such allocations should also be democratically approved by the entirety of a cooperative's membership. Cooperatives can only succeed if they are capable of retaining surpluses that are commonly owned and shared by their members collectively. Often cooperatives need more capital than what is created from their economic activities. Members are expected to contribute a portion of their member dividends, or what some would call patronage refunds, to

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increase the overall common reserves of a cooperative. After all, a cooperative's capital is retained from surpluses derived from membership shares, so it is therefore considered as common property, and not owned or withdrawable by members.

As stated in ICA, the cooperative's common capital is used for the growth and sustainability of the cooperative itself. This requires a democratic approach to rule-making to make sure that members of a cooperative do not use its common capital for their own personal benefit. Members of a cooperative need in addition access to local knowledge so that they can adapt their collective decision-making to changing conditions they may face. To define her third principle concerning collective-choice arrangements for participation in the decision-making process, Ostrom (1990) states that commoners need low-cost access to information about their local context to create and vote on rules and strategies leading to the sustainable management of a shared resource, especially when local conditions change. Once the community around a common resource establishes these rules, the community must ensure that members fulfill their own role in effectively executing these rules and do each their fair share of contributing to the sustainability of the shared resource. Ostrom's vision for democratic rule-making in the context of collective-choice arrangements applies to commons as much as cooperatives.

Cooperatives are also autonomous, given that they are democratically controlled and voluntary. Despite entering binding agreements with other entities to raise capital from external resources, such as government agencies or socially responsible enterprises, cooperatives must maintain the freedom to govern themselves and democratically control their cooperative autonomy. While cooperatives may have engaged with legislators to construct legal frameworks, they have consistently avoided being an instrument for the state. Because of their autonomy, they have also been more effective in playing a role in public policy. But their autonomy must be protected in order to maintain their effectiveness as positive pillars of democracy, especially as regards pressure or takeover attempts from profit-driven enterprises who may have furnished capital. Members must be aware of this fact if they want to maintain democratic control of their cooperative.

Commons follow a similar need for autonomy as implied by Ostrom's fourth principle, which is the minimum recognition of rights by other institutions. The rulemaking of a communities's use of a shared resource must be respected by outside authorities. In other words, it is essential for governments to respect the rights of communities to create their rules in the usage and governance of a shared resource. This principle is exercised to ensure that commons are not subject to regulatory slippage or government failure, especially when the production and use of a resource are set to match the local conditions of the community and the shared resource itself. If external rules are imposed by authorities, the risk of regulatory slippage is greater and may not be adaptable to the commons' local conditions. Cooperatives and commons thus share this trait of autonomy, which is critical to the functioning and sustainability of both entities. This principle can help cooperatives and commons work together to avoid interference from external authorities. They can also work together to adapt rules that ensure both entities are autonomous in their own right. As a result, local governments and enterprises can respect the rights that commoners and members of a cooperative have to develop rules and democratically control their functionality and purpose.

Cooperatives have been consistent hubs of education, training, and information for their members that contribute to the development and growth of their organization. Education is crucial to cooperatives as it distributes an understanding of cooperative principles and values, as well as knowing how to apply them on a

ISSN: 2247-6172, ISSN - L: 2247-6172
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(Volume 18, Issue 2/ 2019), pp. 43-57
URL: http://www.reaser.eu
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daily basis. It also helps members increase their own social development as they come to understand the complexity and richness of a cooperative's identity and social goals. Cooperatives also can offer their members effective training in practical skills and even provide the general public information so that large populations might engage in ecologically and ethically sound initiatives for their communities. Cooperatives often participate in educational programs that are open, accessible, and available to all. Technology certainly plays a role in the dissemination of education and information, providing new ways of spreading knowledge to large numbers of interested participants at a low cost. This can be done through the transmission of big data in information technologies and open-source sharing of knowledge. Overall, this builds upon a culture of civic participation, which can lead to the social transformation needed to address ongoing urgent issues of capitalism. □

Commons also have many similar ways of distributing knowledge and awareness so that communities can become a more sustainable and ethical force for local contexts. Ostrom's second principle, which adapts the appropriation and provision of common resources to local needs and conditions, requires the spread of knowledge and information so that commoners are well informed and can use their rights to participate in rule-making in an effective and democratic manner. For the rules to coincide with the needs of the community, commoners learn about the local conditions to see what is best. They will also learn, through participation and collective action, how to obtain their needs through understanding the collective interests of the commons that are in the first place. Also, Ostrom's eighth principle of building nested tiers is designed to spread knowledge and information about lessons learned from the governance of other commons. This is done to engage the lowest tier of the population in common activity. This dynamic keeps commoners informed about how to use collective action in the rule-making of the shared resource's use in the local context.

The most important principle of Ostrom dealing with the spread of knowledge, information, and education is building the capacity for commoners to resolve conflicts in a low-cost manner. Conflict-resolution mechanisms come from the accumulation of knowledge by each member of a community. This is done through interactions that take place in general assembly meetings. It is also done through online participation in which each commoner has access and rights to the circumstances of the use of a shared resource. Connecting online is seen as a low-cost way of obtaining knowledge and participating in the rule-making of a commons. This can be most efficiently done in online voting and modification schemes that are accessible and modifiable by everyone who is involved in the decision-making of rules. Commons and cooperatives can both follow the principle of using low-cost innovative and technological mechanisms to assume their duty in informing members about various rules and local conditions. They can work together to provide members and communities with key information about this. They can provide a means of participation together to ensure that commons are effectively governed and managed. On the same note, cooperatives can use the information provided by the commons to be economically operational while also providing members and communities with practical solutions addressing their ecological and social needs.

Cooperatives become more successful when they forge a network that builds a strong movement of social transformation. They strengthen the movement by co-constructing resources together through the notion of solidarity and the common desire to achieve sustainable and equitable futures for the world's population. The ICA guidance notes underline how cooperatives are more likely to succeed when working together to forge a groundbreaking movement. Such interaction between cooperatives also requires some levels of reciprocity,

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and so builds mutual trust. Cooperation might entail aggregated purchasing and supply chain contracts between cooperatives as well as financial support from larger cooperatives to smaller entities in the form of grants or soft loans. Positive network externalities also apply to commons, as crystallized in Ostrom's eighth principle pertaining to what she referred to as "multiple layers of nested enterprises." Ostrom has said on many occasions that a well-connected commons movement is necessary to ensure the success of commons, each of which embedded in localized settings but connected in global networks. Commons connected in networks can provide each other valuable lessons. Smaller commons can be scaled up as they join the network through interactions with larger and more successful commons.

6. The Commons-Cooperatives Movement: The Case of Procommuns Barcelona

While this idea of collaborating commons with cooperatives is very new, some examples of a commons-cooperatives movement already exist. We can already identify collaborations between commons and cooperatives in the form of peer-to-peer production, and this should already be considered as a promising lead for the existence of a commons-cooperatives movement. Barcelona has set up initiatives on a citywide level that ensure both commons and cooperatives are adapting their own principles into one forged movement, and they are doing this in the form of peer-to-peer relations. They are setting up what they call a 'commons collaborative economy' where platform cooperatives are working in a commons-oriented approach to empower the citizens of Barcelona in key decision-making initiatives.

This is done to counteract the domination of platforms that follow a strictly capitalist approach, such as Uber and Airbnb. To prevent the effects of this sort of capitalist platform domination, they are assembling platforms in which citizens are empowered to decide for themselves how best to govern specific resources in Barcelona. To open up the commons collaborative economy, Barcelona, a series of platforms, and motivated urban residents started a forum known as Procommuns, which was designed for the co-creation of public policies facilitating this commons-oriented collaborative economy. The purpose of this forum was to combine the commons models and platform cooperatives to democratize the economy on a large scale. According to the DECODE project summary in Fuster Morell et al. (2017), which explains the inner workings of Procommuns and thereby illustrates this fusion, a commons-collaborative economy is defined as a "tendency, set of qualities, and a modality of its collaborative platform economies that are characterized by a commons approach with regards to governance, economic strategy, technological base, knowledge policies, and social responsibility." The DECODE project described in Fuster Morell et al. (2017) then highlights the externality impacts which such fusion between cooperatives and commons may have on platforms.

They define the commons collaborative economy in terms of four criteria, the first one being peer-to-peer relations. Peer-to-peer relations facilitate the involvement of communities made up of peers who generate collective governance schemes for platforms that resemble those described in the commons literature. They do this through participatory action in order to contradict the hierarchical demands and contractual relationships that exist in highly capitalist platforms such as Uber and Airbnb. The second criterion pertains to the governance values that define the community of peers and their needs, not profitability. That governance scheme is based on value distribution among peers, a phenomenon that strongly resembles the idea of co-ownership and co-creation, notions that are identified in cooperatives, and in the commons movement. The third criterion is based on access to infrastructure and access to the provisions of commons

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(Volume 18, Issue 2/ 2019), pp. 43-57
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resource, their reproducibility, and their capacity to include all members equally and fairly dividing these provisions for collective benefit. The fourth criterion is sharing the responsibility of these platforms and their various externalities that may be generated in the process.

These four criteria in the DECODE project summary found in Fuster Morell et al. (2017) strongly resemble what we would imagine as a commons-cooperatives movement. And, in conclusion, we can claim that this commons-oriented model within a collaborative economy helps involved communities in cities develop and share commons resources whose ownership follows the guidelines provided by both ICA and Ostrom. Assembling these criteria together, we can exemplify a commons-cooperative movement in which principles and objectives are shared and applied. This collaborative effort to assume shared responsibilities and achieve shared collectives means that we can identify this approach as a commons-oriented collaborative economy.

We can now identify the very actors, which are cooperatives that follow the commons approach in democratizing the local economy of Barcelona and implicating its members and citizens in a commons-based approach. A qualitative assessment in Fuster Morell and Espelt (2018) shows which cooperatives have joined the Commons-oriented collaborative economy in Barcelona by assessing their values and initiatives based on whether their governance is collective, whether they have an economic model, whether their use of technology is based on open source tools, whether their dissemination of information is open and democratic, and whether their actions have a positive and collective social impact on communities and their members. These qualities strongly resemble those described in both the ICA principles and the institutional arrangements of Ostrom (1990). In other words, these aforementioned qualities are what form a Commons-Cooperatives movement. Such actors identified in Fuster Morell and Espelt (2018), among many others, include El Recetario, Katuma, and eReuse.

El Recetario is labeled as a consumer and producer cooperative platform that focuses on research, experimentation, and the reuse of waste in order to produce accessories such as furniture. In other words, there is the production of a resource based on the reusability of wasted resources and collectively provided information on how to use these resources to produce final goods such as furniture. Information on the production is collectively shared by the community of creators who form this cooperative platform, sharing how they use these wasted resources to produce furniture and other accessories. Their governance scheme is based on voluntary open participation, so those participating in the platform benefit from having access to this information, which they can then use and share with others who are included in the platform. In other words, El Recetario is a cooperative that provides collectively shared information on the reusability of underutilized resources. That information, specific to contexts that are brought out by its members, is managed as a commons.

Katuma is also considered as part of the commons cooperatives movement, because it is an agricultural-food consumption platform that takes many of its values from the commons, especially concerning collective governance. The platform uses open knowledge and open-source software to promote projects based on connecting agricultural producers to collective groups of consumers who are within proximity. The producers and consumers are connected based on social justice, which emphasizes fair and just relations between individuals and their collective base. That platform is based on cooperative governance between its members, who pay a membership fee to join the platform and take advantage of its functions. The members are both the producers and consumers of these agricultural products, which are produced, managed, and also

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consumed in a collective governance scheme. The platform is based on open-source software, so members can constantly develop, share, and have access to this information, ensuring transactions and connections between the consumers and producers in a transparent and functional way. The use of open-source software, the transactions based on social justice, and the governance model between its members strongly replicate the qualities that define a commons-cooperative movement.

eReuse is a platform that focuses on refurbishing and reusing computers. It is created by Pangea, which is a non-profit organization in collaboration with fifteen community organizations who seek to lower their ecological and electronic footprint by recycling and revitalizing used and thrown out computers. The platform consists of open data and open-source tools developed by its members to reduce the costs of computer revitalization. They also developed a tool designed to detect and provide information on the origins of reused material. This is done to detect how long the material will last and at what point in its lifespan the material cannot be recycled anymore. This information allows these communities to produce computers that would have otherwise been wasted in the first place. They may also develop common capital in their economic growth model if they produce a surplus of usable computers or in paid services such as equipment distribution, devices appraisal, and information reporting. The decision-making process of participation is between its members and maintains the social responsibility of reducing the impact on computer production. Because of its governance scheme, access of information, and the production of reusable resources in a collective and open manner, eReuse is a cooperative that distinctly adopts commons principles, therefore making it a key actor of the commons-cooperative movement.

7. Conclusion

These three illustrative examples discussed in Fuster Morell and Espelt (2018) are very distinct in emulating the values associated with a commons-cooperatives movement in the form of peer-to-peer relations. In addition, these three cases replicate the ICA principles in terms of how they organize their membership, how they collectively produce their product, and how they share information and govern their operations. They also replicate Ostrom's principles of commons in terms of the collective management of the resource-based around communities who want to make a positive social and environmental impact on their surroundings. As a matter of fact, all three platforms are the result of matching between these two principles. One can, therefore, conclude that these three organizations can be labeled commons-oriented cooperatives that are key actors of the commons-cooperative movement. This commons-cooperative movement is also proving to have a very positive impact on Barcelona's goal to have a democratized economy oriented around commons principles, especially in the wake of dominant capitalist forces that threaten the integrity and collective good of Barcelona's citizens.

We can even conceive of an interconnected system of cooperatives and commons as being essential in the pursuit of their shared objective of bringing about social and economic transformation. Commons and cooperatives can join forces to build a stronger, ethical, and ecologically-sound economy by forging the two networks together into a Cooperative-Commons movement. By matching the various principles between commons and cooperatives, we can see just how closely these two entities can work together to become institutionalized as a paradigm within SSE. While they both serve two different roles for communities, they can join forces to forge one strong movement of SSE to respond to the damaging issues of capitalism more effectively.

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(Volume 18, Issue 2/ 2019), pp. 43-57
URL: http://www.reaser.eu
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Manuscript received: 10.09.2019

Manuscript received in revised form: 14.10.2019

Manuscript accepted: 17.10.2019