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The general context

- Proliferation of framework laws on SSE
- The case of Greece and ambivalent feelings
- Coming back to definitional issues
- Academic debates are policy relevant

Social and/or Solidarity Economy: convergences and divergences

- Both strive for the expansion of democracy in economy, modus operandi different than profit maximization
- Social economy: Institutional nuance, enterprises, formal initiatives, market-based and monetized
- Solidarity economy: reciprocity (not predominantly market-based and monetized), informality, political aspirations
- Synthesis into Social Solidarity Economy: increased dialogue, fostering transformative change, effecting changes on traditional social economy agents
- The problem of translation

The cooperative movement conducive to sustainable development

Sustainable Development	Economic security	Social Justice	Ecological Balance	Political Stability
Coop Identity				
Member-centered	Adaptability to changing circumstances	Members define needs and the way to satisfy them	Economy and ecology solutions	Preserving spaces of democratic deliberation
	Member loyalty	One member-one vote	Concern for a healthy environment	
	Low transaction costs	Not profit but surplus distribution based on transactions	Financial return on investment is not the priority, more environmentally friendly production methods	
	Prefer surplus over profit	Appropriation of surplus for social security coverage		
Openness to new members		Increase in the number of constituents benefiting from the coop		
Indivisible reserves	Local stability		Intergenerational solidarity	
Audit mechanisms	Early signals			
Education		Information sharing		
Cooperation among coops	Collective guarantee funds		Pooling activities – less pollution	
Concern for the community/social audit			ecological assessments	

Wider societal concerns in SSE as a social movement

- Selection of productive activities according to the social needs of the relevant community and not simply on the grounds of market opportunities.
- Commitment to explore productive methods and technologies which, if not beneficial, at least do not harm the environment and do not lead to the depletion of natural resources.
- A price policy which takes into account the potential exclusion of certain social groups in need of the relevant products and/or services.
- Payment schemes which foster an equitable system within these initiatives.
- Collaboration with other SSE initiatives towards building viable ecosystems.
- Involvement of all the constituencies affected by the operation of the particular initiative formally or informally
- Not only social character of productive activities: the social entrepreneurship agenda

The inherent social character of cooperatives

- Openness to new members (Principle 1), but subject to persons being able to use the services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership
- Obligation to hold profits into indivisible reserves but more a commitment to the collective character of the enterprise than a real social use of accrued profits.
- Cooperation among cooperatives (Principle 6): Only cooperatives? How is it operationalized in legal provisions?
- Explicit concern for the community (Principle 7): how is it operationalized in legal provisions?
- Cooperatives are definitely social economy agents, not necessarily solidarity economy agents.

The Greek Law on Social and Solidarity Economy: general remarks

- In between the Spanish and the French case, moving towards the latter
- SSE defined in a normative way, endorsing the political aspirations of transformative movement thinking
- Spectrum of activities: wider social benefit, socially innovative practices, sustainable development, provision of general interest social services, social inclusion, more political than juridical in practice.
- Legal actors: self-righteous, other legal persons

The Greek Law on Social and Solidarity Economy: first assessment

- Misalignment between the legal frameworks of different types of cooperatives and the provisions of Law 4430/2016, not on political grounds (i.e. profit distribution in agricultural cooperatives).
- Misalignment between the legal provision for self-righteous and other legal persons not justified by their scope of intervention (workers non members and equity payment systems, horizontal networking)
- Overregulation in certain areas for all (expenditure on wage labour)
- Exclusion of relevant legal actors, opening up to for-profit legal persons.

Policy implications

- Renewed interest in the translation of international cooperative principles into legal provisions
- Unification and harmonization of cooperative legislation in Greece
- Clear mandate of supervision and approval of all relevant legal frameworks by the Special Secretary on SSE
- Debates within networks on values and principles.

Thank you for your attention

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