

**CONTEXT AND RECIPROCITY: A  
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE  
ANALYSIS OF PROCESSES AND  
OUTCOMES OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES**

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# BACKGROUND

- H2020-funded SOLIDUS project on expressions of solidarity in Europe (2015-2018)
- SSE framework WP on channeling solidarity through third sector and co-production
- Cases from WP on spatial expressions of solidarity



## RESEARCH INTEREST

- Working with reciprocity as a concept.
- Looking into impact of broader and locally specific political context on reciprocity:
  - Organisational aims and internal organising
  - Resources
  - Legitimacy of SSE organisations

## EMPLOYING A SSE LENSE

- *social economy*: a set of organizations such as social enterprises, cooperatives, mutual organizations and non-profit associations
- *Solidarity economy*: a perspective highlighting initiative's relationships to contemporary *economy* and *democracy* (Laville 2010, 2014)

Plural understanding of economy (Polanyi) & lifeworld/  
system integration (Habermas)

## PLURAL DIMENSIONS OF SSE ORGANISATIONS

1. *Social dimension*: Activities to enhance quality of life (recognition, skills, participation & inclusion).
2. *Economic dimension*: Self-organised activity, multiple sources of income, to make target groups producers/co-producers, owners/co-owners.
3. *Political dimension*: Alter political discourse, promote alternative practice (Laville & Salmon, 2015; Fraser, 2013; Habermas, 1996).

# RECIPROCITY

- Reciprocity as voluntary establishment of relations between groups or persons, referring to giving, receiving and to give in return, binding people in solidarity.
- Expressed through heterogeneous or homogeneous actors involved in a magnitude of civic initiatives,
- Users, workers, and volunteers, representatives of public authorities or providers of capital come together, safeguarded by public and private interest (Laville & Cattani, 2006; Laville, 2010; Hulgård, 2016).

# DEMOCRATIC SOLIDARITY

A combination

- of principles of redistribution to ‘reinforce social cohesion and to redress inequality’ according to political priorities and interests, and
- an understanding of reciprocity as a way to enhance ‘voluntary social relations between free and equal citizens’,
- embedded in a system that combines redistributive solidarity with a political process that allows emancipatory social action (Laville 2014).

## TYPES OF RECIPROCITY

- *Unequal or vertical reciprocity*: the group in charge of the initiative (volunteers, professionals, public authorities) differs from the users/ consumers of a service or product (i.e. workers in a WISE),
- *Reciprocity among peers or horizontal reciprocity*: in homogeneous groups or self-organised group who will be future workers or users (i.e. cooperatives)
- *Multilateral reciprocity*: a variety of actors in different relationships with the initiative (as workers, volunteers or users) come together in a symmetrical position, either from the start or over time, 'provided the beneficiary group is given consideration and able to *dictate its terms*' (Gardin 2014).



## LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

*Social dimension:* Internal democratic functioning.

*Economic dimension:* Resource mix.

*Political dimension:* Legitimacy in their political environment

How does this environment affect the reciprocity dimension of solidarity?

- Working relationship with local politics and administration
- Possible reasons for economic behavior of the initiative

## FOOD BAG ORGANISATION, HUNGARY



- started in 2008 as an attempt to promote alternative way of buying food and healthy diet, supply of a pre-ordered weekly bag of locally produced and/or organic food
- Moved from membership to open subscription
- Limited liability company selling locally produced food and and non-profit association promoting organic, seasonal and locally produced food

## 1. Motivation & internal democratic functioning

- committed to small-scale low-impact farming, supporting rural local communities and promoting healthy lifestyles;
- Shop run by founder, member meetings to govern association;
- Attempt to employ long-term unemployed, but efficient running of business key for survival.

## 2. Resources

- Earned income (shop) & volunteers
- Trust in products through vetting procedures supports „shopping communities“

## 3. Legitimacy in their political environment

- Organisation neutral and financially independent;
- Civil society either closely linked to political institution or political parties, not seen as independent.

**Mostly horizontal reciprocity** (similar socio-economic background of producers and users)

## SKOVSGÅRD MODEL, DENMARK



- several independent social enterprises and a foundation cooperating in a network;
- providing housing and employment for people with intellectual disabilities since 1983 in a rural municipality in Northern Jutland;
- producing community services, local grocery shop and campsite, hotel and community space, contributing to community development.

## **I. Motivation & internal democratic functioning**

- Principle of meaningful employment and production within local community
- Multiple-stakeholder governance in some initiatives, Equality principles in bringing forward ideas
- High individual investment of staff, equal pay for all.

## **2. Type of reciprocity and resources**

- Earned income and public redistribution, latter declining.
- Community support in exchange for services.

## **3. Legitimacy in their political environment**

- Strong ties to municipality, SE agenda-setting.
- Strong welfare tradition and history of cooperative and educational movements.
- Win-win strategy

**Multilateral reciprocity** (promoting as much autonomy as possible, including range of stakeholders)

# ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS ON TYPE OF RECIPROCITY?

Horizontal reciprocity	Vertical reciprocity	Multilateral reciprocity
Earned income and volunteering	Private redistribution and volunteering	Earned income, public and private redistribution
Weak formal internal democracy	Weak formal internal democracy	Relatively strong formal internal democracy
No relationship to local politics	No relationship to local politics but partnering with local public institutions	Strong ties to local politics with social economy agenda for rural development
National policy to support local produce and consumption but public perception of civil society as lacking independence	Limited welfare state but public recognition of independent charity sector in social care	Solidarity principles in welfare state with tradition of top-down collaboration with civil society

## COMMONALITIES AT ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL

- Providing a new service
- Not driven by self-interest, high motivation
- High levels of trust within networks and community
- Formal & informal internal democracy depend on organisation's legal form and/ or target group capabilities

## CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

- Confirms that SSE organisations thrive with support of political institutions (e.g. Nyssens & Petrella, 2015) in forms of legal provisions, public funding, and collaborative partnerships;
- Fostering multilateral reciprocity and stronger democratic solidarity
- Design of coproduction settings: trust, power relations, co-learning (OECD, 2017; Ferrin et al., 2017; Avelino et al., 2017; Cho, 2013)



THANK YOU

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