

Social Economics

Solidarity Economics as a Challenge to Conventional Economic
Thinking and Practice

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Solidarity Economies and Untapped Resources

- Searching for the basis of solidarity economics in a number of places: the study of coops, communes and also the neglected field of ECONOMIC ANTHROPOLOGY.
- Notably: the comparative study of actually existing alternative economic systems and their connections to culture and society
- Many have achieved high levels of ecological sustainability, gender equality and social equity

Economic Theory

- Economic anthropology suggests the provisionality of neo-classical economics and that there are resources for rethinking the possibilities of economic life along radically non-neo liberal principles.
- The existence of economies without the “Market”.
- There are alternatives to both capitalism and conventional socialism.
- The articulation of economic factors with social practices.

“Economies of Affection”

- Many examples of such economies exist: in Tanzania, Fiji, the Riau Islands, Polynesia, amongst indigenous South American peoples, etc.
- These demonstrate how economic life is embedded in social practices, ontologies, epistemologies, and institutions.
- Avoiding the intense stress that the neo-liberal model places on people and the environment.
- Embodying the practice of Localism

Economics as a Virtual Science

- Conventional economics is a “virtual science” – one that creates what it purports to describe rather than actually discovering it.
- Any economic system generates subjectivities,
- Including consumerism and commoditization in the case of capitalism.
- The system of objects; why do we want things?
- The ethnography of the future.

Lessons to be learned

- The lack so far of serious alternative economic theory.
- The economics, politics and sociology of Transition
- Living with scarcity while addressing poverty and inequality
- Against the impoverishment of our social vision
- Against the illegitimate colonization of the social, the ecological and the cultural by the economic (or one version of it).
- After Growth/ After Oil
- Towards the economics of happiness; learning from anthropology and comparative economics

Context

- Includes:
- Solidarity Politics
- Psychology
- Culture as “Development”
- Ecology
- Change: Globalization, technology, social organization, migration, urbanization

Critique

- The myth of GNP
- Economics of happiness
- Assumptions about human behavior
- Individualism
- The colonization of life by economics
- The creation of subjectivities
- Externalities

Social costs

- The social costs of NLE and its practice(s)
- Values and rationality
- Economies of Distance v. Economies of localization
- The implications of the Division of Labor
- Sustainability and the viability of the future
- Democracy/Autonomy/Patriarchy

Towards Holism

- The notion of Integral Development
- Genuine Human Needs v. the postmodern critique
- Well-being and notions of health, of individuals and of society
- Creativity, autonomy and post-materialism
- The ecological imperative: Human Solidarity and Solidarity With Nature

Towards social imagination!