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Title of Session: Solidarity Economy: perspectives and experiences towards the construction of different societies

Name of Session Convener(s): Igor Vinicius Lima Valentim

University/Organization incl. City: Technical University of Lisbon/SOCIUS Research Centre (Lisbon, Portugal) and ECOSOL-CES Research Group (Coimbra, Portugal)

Chair: Igor Vinicius Lima Valentim

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I) Title of Selected Paper: 'Economic Empowerment of Women' as a Global Project: The Limits of Social Change in the Neo Liberal Era

Name/s of Author/s: Nitza Berkovitch and Adriana Kemp

University/Organization incl. City: Ben Gurion University, Israel, and Tel Aviv University, Israel

Abstract: Social economy projects geared at the social inclusion of disadvantaged women via their inclusion in the market economy as micro-entrepreneurs, recipients of micro-credit or as founders and members of cooperatives, have gained increasing recognition as a viable mode of economic action, the emerging solidarity economy and a progressive policy tool. The host of initiatives that seek to re-embed the economy in the "social" - stretching an implicit link between social economy, social change and economic development - has become a global project in two interlinked senses: in regard to its geopolitical reach and in regard to the institutions that design, promote, and implement it. Embraced by global institutions, supported by powerful international donors, sanctioned by national governments, and implemented by NGOs and grassroots organizations, the social- inclusion- of disadvantaged- women- via- markets is

increasingly presented as a panacea for offsetting the social toll of neo-liberal policies in the impoverished global South and retrenching welfare states in the affluent global North. This presentation aims at: (a) tracing the institutions involved in the global making of the "economic empowerment of women" project; (b) engaging critically with prevalent discourses that portray this project as an innovative solution to persistent social problems and as catalyst for social transformation. Drawing on an analysis of official documents produced by international institutions and transnational women's organizations and networks, we explore the modes wherein discourses on women empowerment and social inclusion reproduce the ideological underpinnings of neo-liberal prescriptions that champion self-reliance, 'entrepreneurialism' and self-reponsibilization, thereby limiting women social and economic rights.

II) Title of Selected Paper: Local and Solidary Economy: An analysis of local power from new economic and social dynamics in Brazil

Name/s of Author/s: Cristiano de França Lima

University/Organization incl. City: University of Coimbra, Coimbra, Portugal

Abstract: This article aims to analyze the extent to which local power in Brazil, is being reconfigured by new socio-economic relations with some politic expressions which are exercised by the movement of solidary economy. It seeks the understanding of the local power within a distant historical perspective related to "clientelismo". Nowadays, this idea is limited in terms of understanding the dynamics of the power that is in constant relationship with civil society. Starting from the idea that the globalization is not everywhere, the local space is very relevant in order to uncover the social, political, economic and cultural relations that weren't hegemonically globalized. These relations are part of a dynamic and complex process and coexist with others similar relationships and global process. In this sense, the local power constitutes a model in the political aspect, from which alternative possibilities emerge to the traditional forms of representation, through which citizens will take responsibilities in partnership with the public power in order to solve the problems and the fate of life in society. Thus, the conclusion is that the local power has been redesigned by new hierarchical forms of power and new social "(re)arrangements". They generate new challenges within the process of democratization.

III) Title of Selected Paper: Consolidating Solidarity Economy in Brasil through social networks: the case of Rede Solidária da Pesca

Name/s of Author/s: Felipe Addor, Sidney Lianza and Vera de Fátima Maciel Lopes

University/Organization incl. City: Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Abstract: The creation of the National Solidarity Economy Secretariat (SENAES) in 2003 in Brazil by Lula's government represented the beginning of a new phase for the Solidarity Economy Movement. Previously, the construction of a cooperative economy was restricted to civil society initiatives or local government's policies. Since then, the Secretariat has developed several actions to improve and consolidate the movement. After some years of experience, SENAES started a new strategy for developing the Solidarity Economy in Brazil that concentrates in two axes: Productive Chains and Social Networks. This decision was made after the perception that the investments in isolated initiatives were, in general, not successful.

Articulated with SENAES new strategy, three years ago began the construction of Rede Solidária da Pesca (RSP). It was initiated by the articulation of three projects in Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, Pará and Amazonas, that had some similarities: direct contact with the fishing productive chain workers; use of participatory methodologies to implicate these workers in the process; stimulation of the cooperative work and the articulation with the Solidarity Economy Movement. RSP is integrated by several workers associations (Colônias de Pescadores), non-governmental organizations, cooperative enterprises, universities, local, regional and national government. In a collective decision, the main focus of RSP is the Professional and Political education of the workers.

On the present moment, RSP is building the Educational Project for the workers of the fishing productive chain, trying to have a national approach, but respecting the particularities that exist in each Brazilian region.

IV) Title of Selected Paper: Practicing what you preach: interconnections between values and behaviours of researchers and the precepts of Solidarity Economy

Name/s of Author/s: Igor Vinicius Lima Valentim

University/Organization incl. City: SOCIUS Research Centre, Technical University of Lisbon, Portugal

Abstract: Economia Solidária in Portuguese, Economie Solidaire in French and more recently Solidarity Economy (SE) in English. These are concepts created by academics in

order to name collective initiatives in different countries greatly - but not exclusively - related to work and income generation. Their examples range from associations of scavengers to cooperatives created and managed by former industry workers who took control while the companies were getting bankrupt.

Based on pieces of academic knowledge related to SE and looking at the diversity of organizations considered to belong to this other economy, we can say that there are very distinct views and understandings of what SE stands for in distinct countries, sometimes even in one single nation.

One of the aspects that would make the SE a unique movement is that its organizations search for values like solidarity, egalitarianism and self-management, different from the ones that underlie the capitalist logic. This way, analyzing Solidarity Economy is not only a matter of looking to what is done but mainly to the ways how it is done. Although, few have been investigated about the role of the researchers in the construction of this other economy.

This paper does not aim to answer but to create different questions related to the field of SE. Departing from a critical analysis of the values and principles considered by the academics to be the basis of Solidarity Economy, we propose a reflection: to what extent is it possible to preach Solidarity Economy as a strong and alternative political project without acting according to its values?