

What can be learned from archaic economies while reflecting on the role of solidarity economies in development?

1. Introduction

Current needs for development show that it is necessary to go beyond the traditional thinking of development as a set of tools that the public sector should implement. It is possible to consider development in the most general sense as the total elimination of inequalities within and between societies, not only applications that suggest temporary solutions to economic and humanitarian crises by collaborating with international organizations and local governments. In this sense, solidarity economies can be considered as one of the effective experiments for development.

Solidarity economies aim to cultivate the seeds of a post-capitalist world by radically changing our perception of daily and economic life. The activity of offering local solutions to local problems with non-hierarchical arrangements as the primary goal while organizing the activities. Because solidarity economies set out with the argument that the economic system we are in is not “the ultimate economy” and does not have unique and ideal functioning, while experimenting with an alternative economic process, it is not surprising to encounter the archaic examples of economy and rethink alternative mechanisms such as barter and potlatch. Inspired by archaic economy examples, solidarity economies invite new perspectives on development by transforming these with creative solutions suitable for today's needs.

It is not surprising that mainstream approaches in economics and development, which is based on conveying the economic doctrine of capitalism, does not find it worthwhile to examine the different and stimulating economic lives in human history. Our knowledge of archaic examples therefore comes from anthropologists and heterodox economists. The

studies of Bronislaw Malinowski introduced these examples to the academic scene, critiques of Marcel Mauss and economic perspective of Karl Polanyi enriched the topic.

2. What is “Solidarity Economies”?

The Lima Declaration, which emerged as a result of the International Conference on Global Solidarity held in Lima, Peru in 1997, makes the first mention of solidarity economies. As a reaction to the current economic order, the conference laid the groundwork for a global solidarity movement, and solidarity economies were defined as an economic, political, and social project all at the same time (RIPESS, 1997).

Together with the social economy, solidarity economies are often referred to as social and solidarity economies (SSE). Although they are non-profit structures that prioritize social change, the social economy, also known as the third sector, continues to exist within capitalist market relations in both labor and fund-raising processes. Works as philanthropic mechanisms that only provide palliative solutions are frequently used to bridge the gap in the first two sectors. They serve the purpose of improving the well-being of individuals and groups when political and economic plans are insufficient under the current circumstances (Restakis, 2006, p. 2).

Solidarity economies, on the other hand, seek to fundamentally and permanently change the current economic system. They can operate in all sectors using non-market mechanisms. Solidarity economy examples emerge autonomously all over the world, seeking local solutions to local problems with the support of collective and grassroots movements while also succeeding in being a part of a global movement. The actors of social movements against destruction of nature, labor exploitation, gender discrimination, inequality, poverty, and racism form the backbone of solidarity economies. Despite emerging as a reaction to crises and increasing inequalities in living conditions, solidarity economies aim to reorganize

everyday life in all aspects and create lasting change. In addition, by criticizing mainstream economic doctrines, it has the potential to provide a new conceptual ground in economics, for development discussions, and for the history of economic thought.

Although solidarity economies is a current issue; its actors, goals, emergence conditions, and organizational forms are elements we are familiar with from our daily lives and from the history of humanity. Jean-Louis Laville (2010) considers alternative economy experiences from around the world to be pioneers of solidarity economies. The search for the segments that the union movement, which reduced the labor struggle in Europe in the 1960s to salary and contract negotiations, were unable to represent, resulted in the re-emergence of worker cooperatives, factory occupations, and the emergence of worker-owned enterprises. Along with these developments, labour struggles' context and discussions are broadened to seek qualitative change; such as the necessity of struggling with the conditions that lead to alienation and self-management were added to debates revolving around wages (Laville, 2010. p.2). It is not surprising that the people of South America, governed by authoritarian and dictatorial regimes, tend to create solidarity-based economic models as a result of being forced into informal working conditions during times of social turmoil such as ongoing debt crises, rising unemployment rates, and the disruption of democratic processes (Laville, 2010. p.9). Throughout history, societies have struggled to find alternative solutions to livelihood concerns that have arisen for a variety of reasons in various parts of the world. However, rather than being a massive project or theory that will save humanity, solidarity economies is a unique umbrella concept, with their flexible and pluralistic structure that is shaped in the process, opens up space for differences.

Solidarity economies, according to Ethan Miller (2004), are a worldwide developing economy of commons that connects thousands of local examples by establishing large-scale, viable, and creative networks of resistance organized from below against the understanding

of economy that prioritizes profit over all else (p.2). Miller, like Laville, sees solidarity economies as a concept that feeds on practices that exist today or have existed in the past. Today, Many activities that are not seen as productive and viable economic activities such as household subsistence activities (raising children, housework, elderly care, particularly the duties that are mostly assigned to women unequally), traditions such as barter and bazaar, voluntary work, gift and sharing economies, and making a living with common resources; actually enable individuals to maintain a large part of their daily lives and can be seen as examples of the activities of a solidarity economy (p.5).

Sunil Ray (2012) defines solidarity economies as a strategy for establishing a new economic epistemology. The foundations of this new epistemology are understanding how global capitalism is integrated into social and cultural fields, establishing a new philosophy of development, and recognizing solidarity economies as a new way of doing politics. Individuals are alienated not only from their own labor, but also from their own bodies, social relationships, natural environments, and societies to which they belong, as a result of the capital circulation. According to Ray, solidarity economies intersect with class struggles and other forms of struggle (such as identity, gender and ecology struggles); They are actors in an area where all kinds of alienation are struggled against. Current development policies are based on assumptions about human behavior and are based on the neoliberal free market doctrine. Current development policies are based on assumptions about human behavior and are based on the neoliberal free market doctrine. The alternative philosophy of globalization and development is a critique of the assumption that individuals' economic behavior is solely motivated by utility maximization. It is critical for solidarity economies to reintroduce different types of economic relations, such as mutual aid and reciprocity, as well as different motivations, such as altruism, into economics education (pp.40-42).

Aslhan Aykaç (2016) defines solidarity economies as economic activities of various sizes that operate outside of the state and market mechanisms. They are not subject to the state in terms of resources or regulations, and they do not operate within the parameters of the capitalist market. They can, however, operate in an informal, unsystematic, dispersed, and unorganized manner, or they can also become formal, structured, and organized mechanisms (p.13).

Aykaç examines solidarity economies on four aspects: reorganizing production, distribution, workplace democracy, and rethinking labor relations. Although flexible specialization, which has become the dominant mode of production as a result of globalization, has provided many benefits to capital owners, it has made the working masses' conditions increasingly unstable and precarious, leading to an increase in inequalities around the world. Solidarity economies have the potential to reorganize production outside of existing market mechanisms in order to meet the needs of workers and local communities (p.58). Another goal of solidarity economies is to eliminate income and social inequalities. Social safety nets, which are organized at the local level, exist outside of market and state mechanisms, and serve to increase the welfare of the region by covering many services such as health, education, child and elderly care in order to improve living conditions, are good examples of the redistribution role of solidarity economies. In addition to all of this, there are examples of local markets in which local currencies are used throughout history and today (p.74).

3. Conceptual Framework

The economy is the collection of relationships that people form with one another and with nature in order to meet their material and nonmaterial needs. Production, distribution, exchange, market, labor, and work, all of which are components of economic activity, have different meanings in different human communities and historical periods (Peksan, 2021,

pp.23-28). These components' meanings today have been shaped by historical and social processes, and they continue to change and transform. When a long active life span is reduced to a full-time wage labor model, it will be helpful to consider the prehistoric economic systems while elaborating alternative economic models based on solidarity.

Anthropological studies on the economic life of archaic societies, such as those of Marcel Mauss and Bronislaw Malinowski, are helpful while elaborating about the economic field outside of the uniformed capitalist practices and for serving as a guide when discussing alternatives to capitalism. Mauss suggests that these societies have a much more developed and fast-paced exchange system than we know and can use today. He describes a gift exchange system that effectively replaces our buying and selling activity. Law, morality, religion, social order, and economics were similarly intertwined and moving naturally in these societies correlatively where opposing concepts such as borrowing and lending could be expressed with the same words. He reveals how these communities construct an outward-oriented, rich, productive and complex economic system, without buying and selling as we know it, only exchanging and giving gifts (Mauss, 2010, pp. 137-138).

The concept of *diverse economy* also will be useful in understanding solidarity economies and in developing a more inclusive definition of economy. The term, coined by J.K. Gibson-Graham, refers to the economic field as a collection of interactions in a variety of forms, emphasizing the diversity of economic activity. It is used to categorize non-capitalist and alternative economic relations, as well as practices that are frequently excluded and marginalized by economic theory. For example, wage labor is the most common type of work today, and the contribution of alternative forms of labor (such as unpaid volunteering and domestic work, or informally employed labor) to the economic field is overlooked. This conceptualization covers alternative forms of three basic economic relations (production, distribution, and valuation), which are handled through alternative forms of transaction,

different types of labor, and alternative businesses, and reintroduces all of these examples into the economic field (Gibson-Graham, 2006, pp. 54-60).

The historical background of capitalism in creating these conditions is quite a complex and a long-termed subject. This process has been driven by years of colonial activities, wars, appropriation, fencing, seizure and political pressures which still continue. In his book *Great Transformation*, Karl Polanyi mentions the first thing western world taught the people of the primitive communities they conquered was the fear of hunger. For capitalist order to exist, the organic society structure that does not allow the individual to starve must be dissolved (Polanyi, 2001). Harvey includes a similar argument, preventing labor from accessing natural resources like land, air and water through methods such as fencing and privatization is vital in the process of creating paid labor (Harvey, 2017). Solidarity economies have the potential to recuperate the self-sufficiency and autonomy of societies which depend on economic, environmental and humanitarian factors to recover is the reconstruction of solidarity structures.

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