Conceptualizing SSE towards sustainable consumption and production:
Learning across contexts and cultures, from Geneva to Manila.

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Research Question & Approach

In what way can the SSE lead to more sustainable forms of consumption and production?

• Link two research domains: SSE and SCP
• Compare two contexts: the Philippines and Western Europe
• Discuss implications for transitions towards a more ‘sustainable’ society
Methodology

Methods:
• Exchanges between:
  – CD and MS
  – In-depth interviews conducted in Manila and Geneva (2012-2013)
• Literature review

Limits:
• Two very different contexts, in terms of cultural context and geographic scale
• Initial insights that merit further development
Conceptualizing the SSE

• Based on the engagement of voluntarily interdependent people (Servet 2006, 2007)
• Either complementary to or potentially transformative of the overall economy (Fraisse 2003; Kawano 2013)
• Promoting democratic processes…
• …and potentially the democratization of the economy (Defourny and Develtere, 1999; Fraisse et al., 2007)
Conceptualizing SCP

- Reducing material and energy throughputs; reducing negative impacts: loss of biodiversity, global/local pollution, etc. (Georgescu-Roegen 1966; 1971; Daly 1996)
- Tendency to focus on individuals and technologies as central to change (Sahakian 2013)
- Focus on intergenerational responsibility (Brundtland 1987)
- Growth vs Green growth vs de-growth vs growth with prosperity (Jackson 2009)
SSE in the Philippines: how it’s being conceptualized

- Strong civil society tradition; *Bayanihan*: working together towards a common goal
- 5th RIPESS Global Forum of Social and Solidarity Economy: Manila 2013
- Triple bottom line + edifying values + good governance
- A supply chain approach aimed at transforming the overall economy
- Focus on under-privileged groups
SSE in the Philippines: how it’s being practiced

- Active in rural areas, agriculture products/services
- Attempting to create value-chains: organic farmers, with organic pesticide producers, with fair trade markets, etc.
- Engaging secondary cooperatives and their financial services
- But tendency to focus on an elite that can afford such products
Exemples of SSE activities in the Philippines
SSE in the Philippines: main conclusions

- New institutional platform (ASEC)
- So many entities in the Philippines could potentially be a part of the SSE
- Need to diversify the SSE offer towards a supply chain approach: solidarity transport, banking, insurance, etc.
- Need for additional internal coherence: to walk the talk within the organizations
- Very little recognition of the SSE beyond its own members;
SSE in W Switzerland: how it’s being conceptualized

• A response to social and environmental issues, based on explicit guiding principles:
  1. Social wellbeing:
  2. Participative Citizenship and Democracy:
  3. Ecology:
  4. Autonomy:
  5. Solidarity:
  6. Diversity:
  7. Coherence:

Applied to both production and consumption systems
SSE in W Switzerland: how it’s being practiced

• Limiting wage differences (between highest and lowest paid employee)
• Limited capital gains for enterprises
• Working towards favourable work conditions
• Participative governance and transparency
• A great diversity of products and services
• Limiting environmental impact within organizations is happening progressively (including procurement strategies)
Exemples of SSE activities in Geneva
SSE in the W Switzerland: main conclusions

- SSE Chambers rises in the region;
- Great diversity in the types of products and services,
- But limited in size
- But limited vision of how organizations transform the overall economy
- Need to be more coherent internally
- Growing recognition of the SSE as the ‘sustainable development’ economy
## The SSE at a glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Philippines</th>
<th>W Switzerland</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional arrangement</strong></td>
<td>Regional network established 2013 (few members to date)</td>
<td>City/region chambers since 2006 (several hundred members to date)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Value system</strong></td>
<td>Five bottom lines + supply chain approach</td>
<td>Guiding principles for each enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Offering</strong></td>
<td>Mostly agriculture</td>
<td>Highly diverse products and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary beneficiaries</strong></td>
<td>Focus on underprivileged as producers (not consumers); rural context</td>
<td>Everyday people and ethical consumers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visibility</strong></td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Moderate to high (low in educational system)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quantified impact on economy</strong></td>
<td>None to date (that we are aware of)</td>
<td>Represents 10% of all jobs; but more research needed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
General Conclusion

- The SSE is a **concrete area in practice**, and **conceptually ‘under development’**
- The SSE builds on a **long history**
- The **guiding principles /values** of SSE are more explicit than what is put forward in SCP

- The SSE is most **likely the economy of sustainability**
  - An economy with a market
  - Guided by social and ecological values
- But where **environmental values** can be further strengthened
Discussion Points and Future Directions

• What can we learn from systems thinking to strengthen environmental values in the SSE
• Working towards greater coherence,
• Recognizing the importance of culture and context
• Need for solidarity not only across supply chains, but also between regions and between socio-economic groups in a highly unequal world
Thank you for your attention.

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What can SSE bring towards greater sustainability?

• Explicit value system based on putting people and planet above profit
• Concrete examples of environmentally sound and socially fair production systems (Fair trade, local production, etc.)
• Enterprises based on participative governance, concerned for the well-being of workers, consumers and society
• Enterprises that believe in justice, equity and the participation of all stakeholders