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Ethics, Social Economy and Integral Development



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Abstract

Expressing concern about every dimension of human welfare, this paper explores the possibility of enhancing integral development by means of potential synergetic connections between ethics and the postulates of social economy.

Arguments about the importance of utopian and ethical thinking precede the case for a more comprehensive approach towards human development. The synergetic relationship among social economy, ethics, and integral development is based on the simultaneous articulation of ethical definitions, literature from the field of social economy, and the ideas of the philosopher Ken Wilber.

The article concludes with an exhortation to learn from the social economy as an inspiring mean to strive for the implementation of the ideals of ethics and integral development. Even though utopian, the big gap that separates us from a 'better world', makes compulsory the quest for virtuous paths.

Key words

Social Economy
Ethics
Integral Development
Collective Enterprises

La economía social, ética y desarrollo integral

Resumen

Consciente de las múltiples dimensiones del bienestar humano, este artículo explora la posibilidad de impulsar el 'desarrollo integral' mediante las potenciales relaciones sinérgicas que surgen al combinar la ética y los postulados de la economía social.

En primer lugar se argumenta a favor del pensamiento ético y utópico, para luego introducir concepciones más amplias acerca del desarrollo humano. A través de la conjugación de las ideas de la economía social, las ideas del filósofo Ken Wilber y de la ética; se demuestra una relación favorable para lograr un desarrollo integral.

El artículo termina exhortando a la implementación de los ideales del desarrollo integral y de la ética, proponiendo como ejemplo las empresas colectivas de la economía social. La búsqueda de caminos virtuosos, aunque parezca utópica, se hace ineludible cuando constatamos la gran distancia que aún nos aleja de un 'mundo mejor'.

Palabras Clave

Economía Social
Ética
Desarrollo Integral
Empresas Colectivas


*To dream ... the impossible dream ...
To fight ... the unbeatable foe ...
To bear ... with unbearable sorrow ...
To run ... where the brave dare not go ...
To right ... the unrightable wrong ...
To love ... pure and chaste from afar ...
To try ... when your arms are too weary ...
To reach ... the unreachable star ...*

From Man of La Mancha

Lyrics by Joe Darion

Introduction

The Social Economy and today's world

oday's world reverberates with challenges and threats. Embedded in a complex web of causalities, human kind enjoys singular achievements while experiencing unknown tensions in the economic and political realms, as well as at the emotional and cognitive dimensions. The frontiers

of knowledge appear to widen without limits, but the wisdom required to fully enact human potential seems painfully scarce. Individuals are easily sacrificed into the altars of economic and political systems, which from their macro views usually ignore micro concerns.

With this background, some questions emerge as ineluctable: Can we think of humanistic and ethical economic settings? What is the best economic system? According to what criteria will we define what is plausible? What would be the ideal institutional settings enacted to regulate labor relations and consumption patterns?

To conceive and to promote any 'economic' mode of functioning represents a challenge of ineffable complexity, fully charged with ethical implications and loaded with political significance. In every scenario multiple stakeholders are affected and many of them remain voiceless and marginalized.

Capitalism, socialism, communism, cooperativism... each one of them suggests particular policies and

dynamics to confront the economic concerns faced by human societies. Interestingly enough, the economy is not longer reduced to the 'management of the household' -as its etymology would imply-; in today's world it would be a mistake to ignore the political and socio-cultural contexts, as well as the side effects of economic settings.

Several factors create a complex and overwhelming context for human collectivities and individuals: The invasive presence of the economy in other fields of human knowledge and action, people's poverty and nature's degradation caused by the prevailing capitalist dispositions, the disputed role of nation-states, the spreading of illegal markets...

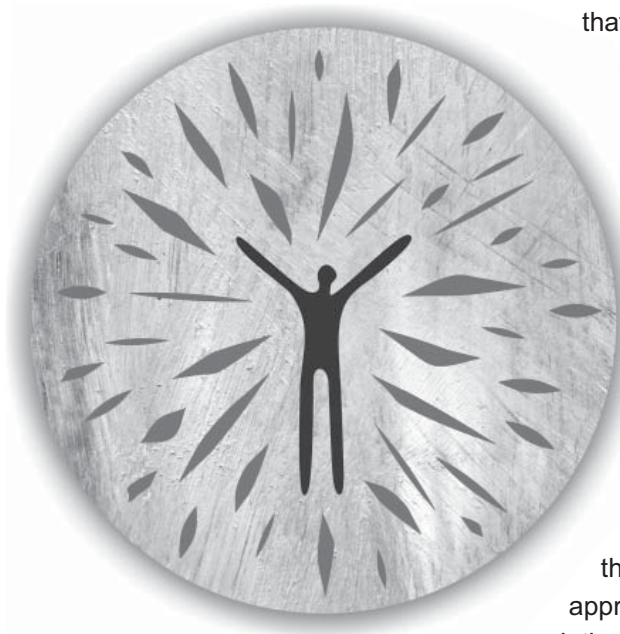
In order not to be overwhelmed with the complexity of the context, it proves plausible to study the compelling contents of the Social Economy¹ -SE, sometimes known as the 'third sector' -in the sense that it is located between the market and the public economy controlled by the state. The SE adopts the principle of associative and democratic life and contains the world of cooperatives and mutualities.

As it will be shown in the following pages, evidence demonstrates that SE projects have deliberately delivered creative answers to the needs and aspirations of people. Especially when people have dared to focus on wellbeing and not on profits; thus reaching new horizons, beyond conventional monetary dynamics and state dependency.

Highlighting the importance of every dimension of human welfare, this paper explores the possibility of enhancing 'integral development' through building upon potential synergetic connections between ethics and the postulates of social economy.

Arguments about the importance of utopian and ethical thinking precede the case for a more comprehensive approach towards human development. The synergetic relationship among social economy, ethics and integral development is based on the simultaneous articulation of ethical definitions, literature from the field of social economy, and the ideas of the philosopher Ken Wilber.

The article concludes with an exhortation to learn from the social economy as an inspiring mean to strive for the implementation of the ideals of ethics



¹ The concept is used here in a comprehensive-agglutinating way to represent the different generations of collective enterprises, cooperatives, social and solidaristic economy initiatives. The main concern is to concentrate the analysis on their common core-values, avoiding the differences derived of diverse geographical emphasis and time contexts.

and integral development. Even though utopian, the big gap that separates us from a 'better world', makes compulsory the quest for virtuous paths.

1. The importance of utopias for the Social Economy (SE)

N'est-ce pas la fonction excentrique de l'imagination (la possibilité du « nulle part ») qui implique tous les paradoxes de l'utopie?

En outre, cette excentricité de l'imagination utopique n'est-elle pas el remède à la pathologie de la pensée idéologique, qui se trouve précisément aveugle et étroite en raison de son incapacité à concevoir un « nulle part » ?

Paul Ricoeur²

If we think about the fatalist consequences of monopolizing ideologies, such as radical economic neo-liberalism (brilliantly denounced by Noam Chomsky when he points out the dangers of falling prey to false consensus and mainstream propaganda (Chomsky, 2003)), we avow the earnest need for fundamental changes in our attitudes and cognitive priorities, which should propel us to seek in depth inquires about the nature and possibilities of plentiful human potential.

In the search for 'new emancipations', utopias ought to play a leading role, countering the abuses of dogmatic ideologies, concentrations of power and economic skews, among many other contemporary problems.

Given the urgency of these problems, utopias enhance the pursuit for 'better worlds'. In that quest, efforts should be constantly made to assure that those new utopias are free of fundamentalisms and exclusive doctrines. In other words; care must

be taken to assure that utopian proposals do not adopt the negative features of the ideologies they aspire to replace. (Like George Orwell wisely warns us in the cautionary *Animal Farm*).

Since 'utopia' and 'ideology' are such controversial terms, it is worthy to recall the ideas of the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur who suggests that both of these concepts have positive connotations, even if they might be denied most of the time. For Ricoeur, the positive dimension of utopias, are featured by the capacity to drive and nourish aspirations for better worlds; and the positive contributions of ideologies consist on their power to hold societies together -without the need to recur to permanent conflict-, creating a common ground of interpretation to facilitate cohesion and the development of other areas of concern (Ricoeur, 1997).

At this stance we face the challenge of finding adequate means of extracting and ensuring the best of both: ideologies and utopias. How can this be done?

From this paper's point of view, the non-dogmatic and inquisitive nature of ethics' purposes and procedures constitute *sine qua non* inputs to reap the most of the mobilizing power of utopias and the cohesiveness provided by ideologies.

Conceptualizations like *Ethics Of Discussion* proposed by Jürgen Habermas (Habermas, 1992) and *Ethics Of Dialogue* -proposed by Thierry Pauchant (Pauchant, 2002) highlight the importance of enacting convenient communicational settings (i.e. ideal language situation, the expression of multiple points of view) and dynamics to facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences among people. In this sense, ideological constructions and utopian formulations can be more strictly scrutinized when they can be ethically assessed.

Several experts demonstrate us that the history of SE (such as formulated since the XIX century) is widely embedded in utopias, and seemingly include more humanistic oriented purposes, that arise from questioning the negative impacts of impersonal market or public orientations (Angers,

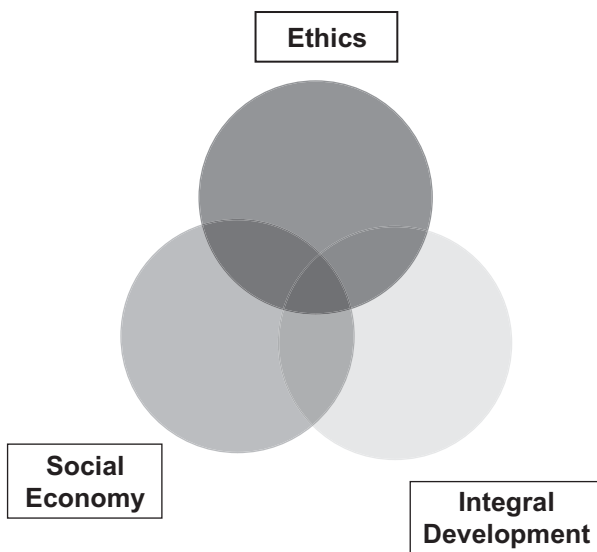
² Ricoeur, Paul (1997, p. 38) "*Is it not the eccentric function of imagination (the possibility of "no-where") the element that implies all the paradoxes of utopia? In other words, is it not this eccentricity of utopian imagination the cure to the pathologies of ideological thought, which is blind and narrow, precisely because of its incapacity to conceive a "no-where"?*" (Translated by the author).

1976), (Axelrod, 1984), (Desroche, 1976, 1982, 1983).

This paper examines the contributions of the *collective enterprises* –CE– that embody the precepts of social economy –SE–, to rethink development and business ethics. The underlying proposition of this paper is based on the evidence that the SE follows more ethical procedures and enacts moral value-oriented practices (Eymard-Duverney & Marchal, 1994), (Defourny, 1995); and that their nature and activities favor a more comprehensive and integral vision of development (B. Enjolras, 2002), (Fauquet, 1965), (Vienney, 1980, 1994).

As a particular type of utopia, we can state that the CE that constitute the SE are capable of reinforcing the pursuit of better worlds, by means of proceeding ethically and seeking more than mere economic growth. Like the following figure suggests (and the following pages will sustain), the utopian search for a better world falls within the area of convergence, that appears when ethics and integral development concerns are combined with social economy.

Figure 1. A utopian area of convergence among Ethics, Integral Development, and Social Economy



The orienting principles and benefits provided by CE push for more humanistic oriented organizations; thus leading to wiser institutions and to higher levels of well-being. Ethical reasoning has the potential to answer the unsatisfied François Angers’ search for ‘the active processes that might lead to a cooperative world’ (Angers, 1976), or Claude Vienney’s longing for ‘the re-equilibrating processes on the dual relationship between enterprises and human groups (Vienney, 1980).

Ethics constitutes an essential means to help prevent CE from de-naturalizing and being absorbed by market biased logics. Preserving the utopia of achieving a better world, more balanced and integrally developed, oblige us to seriously consider the valuable learning and benefits provided by the social economy. While contemporary economic settings generate negative consequences, we should keep on searching for virtuous dynamics, like those promoted by the simultaneous presence of CE, ethical behavior and the active quest for integral development.

2. Ethics and Utopia

What is meant by the concept of ethics? That is not a simple question, especially during current times where the term is used with multiple nuances and sometimes crude manipulations (by some media, spectators, critics, and analysts...) when trying to explain the late financial scandals and general pathologies of the economic system.

Going back to true basics, we discover that essentially ethics can be considered as “a quest for meaningful individual answers and collective patterns of organizations”, with the consequent perception of ethical procedures as modalities of active behavior, totally subordinated to the original intention of will to live or, in other words, the project of life (Claudel & Casse, 1997).

On a consistent way, Thierry Pauchant defines ethics as a wider and more inclusive concept than the related notions of deontology or morals: “ethics is not about dictating behaviors or defining good and evil”. In his conceptualization, “ethics is mostly about

an exploration of the underpinnings that support the definitions of what is considered a good life. Ethics deals in a fundamental way with questions about meaningfulness and meaningless in life. Ethics is closer to wisdom than to justice, closer to hope than to obligation, closer to 'happiness' than to virtue. Therefore, ethical proceedings lead to decision making and action, which are not taken as 'definitive', 'certain', 'un-ambiguous', as is the case with deontology and morals. Ethics leads to the best thoroughly informed decisions and actions" (Pauchant, 2002).

Envisioning a world where ethics is promoted and practiced, in thought and in action, according to the previous definitions, is certainly a worthy endeavor, an appealing and unavoidable utopia. But, what does the apologist of utopia has to say in relation to ethics? How can we strengthen the link between utopia and ethics?

Since Paul Ricoeur deals with the topics of utopia and ideology, his definition merits special underscoring in this paper. For Ricoeur, "ethics is the questioning that precedes the introduction of the idea of moral law, and moral will be everything that in the realm of good and evil relates to laws, norms, and imperatives" (Pesqueux & Biefnot, 2002). In other words, he updates "the ethical intention that precedes, in the founding order, the notion of moral law –in the formal sense of obligation that requires obedience of the subject, motivated by the pure respect of the law itself" (Pesqueux & Biefnot, 2002).

From the previous definitions we can state that ethics implies the search for founding orders, which would provide meaning and the conditions where human beings can freely conceive and live their good life. It is clear that ethical thinking and action represent a category much higher than economic theories and practice, therefore it is just natural that the latter should be embedded in the former. In private business, public economic policies or civilian initiatives, deep reflection about the consequences for all stakeholders shall precede concrete management practices and activities.

The direct results, side-effects and positive externalities generated by the CE and SE initiatives, seem to be the consequences of heightened ethical awareness and deeper human concern, in comparison to the alternative market oriented or state funded enterprises.

Evidence suggest that CE are more naturally inclined to adopt the belief that ethics adds value as a perspective of evaluation and enriches the debate about significant issues such as governance, legitimacy, long term development, financing conditions, etc., without mentioning the high pertinence for management dilemmas and key relations to the organizations stakeholders (Bernier, Bouchard, & Lévesque, 2003), (Bouliane, Fraisse, & Ortiz, 2003), (Cornforth, 2002), (Eme, 2003).

The fact that economic agents are increasingly sensible to the importance of ethics, these become a compulsory asset to be applied in different moments and dimensions of business. It is imperative to deepen the study of the features of the social economy that seems to provide good examples regarding the pursuit of ethics and integral development, even though for some it may seem just a utopia.

It is hard to deny the importance and urgency of thinking ethically (which implies permanent questioning) about utopias capable of inspiring new orders, that among others outputs might guide more satisfying economic settings and unveil more human-wise norms and imperatives.

The concepts of utopia and ethics ought to participate in a mutually nourished and reinforcing causality. The search for new utopias becomes an ethical obligation –at least as long as individuals and groups continue suffering as a consequence of contemporary organizational and economic settings. Besides, we have to introduce ethical procedures in order to prevent the abuses that tend to be committed while conceiving those utopias. In other words we might state that the desire for a more ethical world constitutes a significant utopia by itself, to which we cannot renounce.

3. Integral development –ID- and the social economy

Accepter de faire entrer de nouveaux éléments d'information dans nos représentations, c'est déjà se préparer à juger différemment³.

Bernard Perret (Perret, 2003)

Guy Roustang cleverly signals the inconveniences and limitations of reducing the interpretation of social and solidarist economic initiatives to their economic connotation. With Laurent Fraise, he points out to the danger of inscribing these initiatives within the restricted economic realm. They both suggest that efforts should be made to stress the positive contribution of the social and solidarist economy to the development of democracy (Fraise, 2003), (Roustang, 2003).

Recognizing the guiding values and the room for debate that the SE creates, new interrogations and exchanges trigger more integral inquiries and benefits. Eventually the core specificities of CE should be built around their 'total' contributions that include -among others- openness to interrogate and deliberate about the fundamentals that will help define wellbeing. CE help people become conscious of their multiple needs and aspirations, and to act consequentially.

Besides acknowledging that 1) ethics implies the search for the ultimate underpinnings that help define patterns of good life, and 2) that reflections, decisions and actions should be as fully informed as possible –in order to formulate proper values and sense of meaning; it emerges as essential to trigger the quest for the complete well being of present and future generations.

Thus, diverging points of view should be inquired. In order to diminish the risk of reductionist economic thought, it is required that wider and more comprehensive frames of thought be adopted. In

³ "Aceptar el ingreso de nuevos elementos de información en nuestras representaciones, ayuda a prepararse para juzgar de otras formas" (Traducción del autor).

other words, to explore ideas of development using more profound and integral interrogations.

For example, after many experiences of participative social work and direct engagement with communities, the Chilean economist and Alternative Nobel Prize winner Manfred Max-Neef, has questioned conventional economic thought. He asserts that "Development is about people and not about objects". Consequently he has developed qualitative indicators to assess quality of life along dimensions he considers as representative of the basic human needs (Subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, idleness, creation, identity and Freedom) each one of them occurring at different levels of activity: Being, Having, Doing, Interacting (Max-Neef, 1991)⁴.

Max-Neef's categories legitimize the spontaneous approach of those CE that strive to satisfy the plethora of needs and aspirations of human beings (that coincide with the different levels of activity and that transcend the mere economic initiatives), opening up the way for more inclusive theories about development. But, what do we mean by integral development?

4. Integral development

The American philosopher Ken Wilber has proposed a synthesis of the most prominent theories elaborated to explain reality. In what constitutes a significant effort, Wilber has tried to develop an "integral vision or a genuine Theory of Everything" where he "attempts to include matter, body, soul, and spirit, as they appear in self, culture, and nature" (Wilber, 2001,xii).

His core message is that all of reality, and therefore human reality, takes place –and develops!- in a full

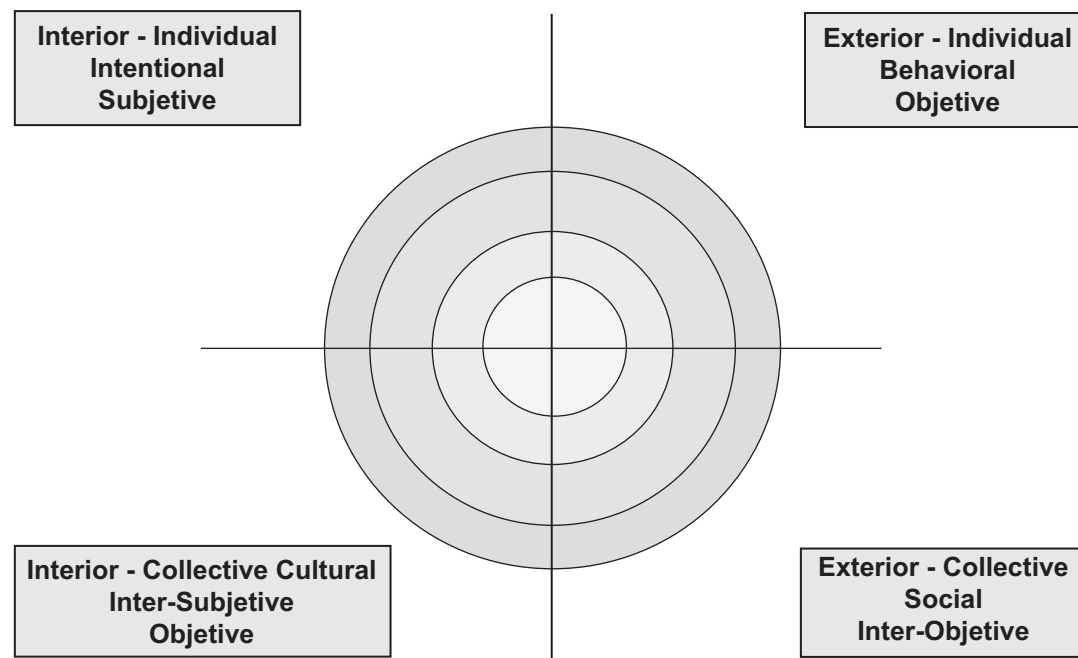
"To accept the entrante of new formation elements in our representations, enables preparation to judge in other ways"

⁴ See for example Katherine and John Peet's (2000), application of Max-Neef ideas in a systems and ethical approach to basic needs. (Poverty and Satisfiers: A systems look at human needs, creating a new democracy).

spectrum that includes individual and collective components, as well as subjective-interior correlates of some other objective-exterior expression. He labels the full spectrum as 'A great Nest' composed of four dimensions, where all of reality unfolds; and in which the congruent and simultaneous growth will be the ultimate purpose of life.

The integral frame developed by Wilber is represented in following figure presented in many of his books (see for example Wilber 2001: 70-71 and Wilber 2000: 67).

Figure 2. Integral Development, Ken Wilber's model: The Great Nest with the Four Quadrants. Source: (Wilber, 2000, 2001)



Ken Wilber's work constitutes an appealing intellectual challenge, for it interpellates intellectuals and practitioners in every area of knowledge –business included- to consider the multiple expressions of reality. Like the physicist David Bohm suggested (and Gareth Morgan, and many other management theorizers have recalled), the enfolded reality may unfold in multiple ways (Morgan, 1997).

This frame of reference signals enormous challenges for the collective enterprises immersed with the precepts of the social economy. Plenty of new horizons for development emerge, all of them demanding ethical interventions to be increased in quantity and actual influence. For example: Cognitive and affective dimensions,

cultural settings, economic organizations, political institutions, cultural patterns, etc.

Ken Wilber's ideas could be applied to enlarge the awareness of SE initiatives, therein consolidating its proximity to the full spectrum of people's needs and aspirations. In this sense, CE can certainly promote a more integral approach to the individuals and communities to be served. Consequently, improved ethical standards can be developed, thus reaching a deeper and wider inquire about the 'presuppositions of good life' and eventual 'meaningful answers' that might result.

Insisting that the focus of impacts should be integral implies that direct business effects should be considered as an important part of the system,

but always under close ethical examination. An example of the compatibility between business and ethics is illustrated by the fact that strengths and strategic advantages can be built as a consequence of adopting a more integral approach towards people.

The virtuous cycle suggested above can be easily threatened if organizational settings (such as schemes of labor distribution, marketing campaigns, definitions of success...) ignore that life conditions depends as much on interior and intangible phenomena as on exterior and empirical forms; for both individuals and collectivities.

The presence of social pathologies related to organizational life (e.g. stressed related illness, psychological unhappiness, social anomie, high rates of suicide, etc.), confirms Manfred Max Neef's *threshold* thesis –which states that beyond a certain point, higher economic income leads to diminishing quality of life. The intuition that traditional economic definitions of development are not only biased but unethical becomes a proven truth. Narrow and dogmatic definitions limit utopias and the possibilities to rethink founding principles.

All the above elements lead us to conclude that an integral conception of development should represent more than just a challenging intellectual concern. Development should become an irrevocable ethical quest for a more meaningful life and a full definition of well being that permeates all business practices. In this sense, the ethical postulates adopted by the CE of the SE emerge as an inspiring example.

5. Business Ethics, Integral Development, and the singularity of CE

On the XXI century *Business ethics* constitute a field of wide scope and significant depth. Literature is quite abundant, reflecting the concerns of multiple economic sectors in most countries (Cavanagh, Moberg, & Velasquez, 1995), (Clarkson, 1995), (Dunfee & Donaldson, 1995), (McCracken & Shaw, 1995), (Orts & Strudler, 2002), (Pasquero, 1997).

Governmental and non-governmental international organizations have contributed to popularize the subject⁵. Contemporary debates regarding corruption, environmental impact, social dumping, governance, and management of enterprises are all influenced by ethical stands and theories.

Critical analysis of economic activities and their consequences, as well as the representations of different business management functions (marketing, finance, purchasing...) leads us to the field of business ethics. Their influence within the search for meanings and the deep interrogation of the respective foundational conventions turns out to be particularly important. (Pauchant, 1996).

Ethical reflection in business environments contributions to current concerns within the field of sociology of organizations. For example in relation to the formation of collaborative agreements, labor organization, behaviors, and norms that regulate relations within and among organizations (Pesqueux & Biefnot, 2002)

Collective enterprises that embody the diverse array of initiatives of the social economy generate different solutions to the needs and aspirations of their users and in that sense assume stands that could be identified as ethical. They question the prevailing socio-economic order while displaying genuine concern for the well being people. Each answer usually represents a kind of innovation - such as has been documented by (Cloutier, 2003), (Lévesque, 2002), (Petitclerc, 2003)- that spurs new assessments regarding the optimal organizational and institutional settings.

For example, the fact that solidaristic initiatives combine different economic coordination mechanisms, such as the market, redistribution, reciprocity, and donations; permits the introduction of new criteria regarding the notion of general interest and new perspectives for the formulation

⁵ Among the most publicly known appear: The World Bank Group, The UN –Global Compact-, Transparency International, La Table Ronde de Caux.

of renewed norms that affect governance and eventual frames for public-private partnership building. (As complementary literature see (Eme, 2003; Bernard. Enjolras, 2004).

The originality of the social economy and potential contributions to ethical discussion is proven as well by the fact that its diverse origins are always related to 'values' that usually provide answers to contextual ethical interrogations. For example, the Rochdale Pioneers recognized as the founders of the cooperative movement – in 1844, England-, based their business on principles that differentiated them from all the other traders. Historical evidence demonstrates that the values adopted –after questioning the prevailing practices of the moment, turned to be the key of their success. A quick look at their principles (as stated by the International Cooperative Alliance) shows us that they cover multiple dimensions that can be considered as representative of ethical intentions:

- Open and voluntary membership
- Democratic control (one member, one vote)
- Fixed and limited interest on share capital
- A surplus allocated in proportion to members' purchases
- Provision for education
- Co-operation amongst co-operatives
- Political and religious neutrality
- No credit
- Quality goods and services

Through these principles, as well as the multiple movements and ideologies that backed pioneer projects of social economy (such as the English Associationism, the French Christian Socialism, Social Conservatism in Germany, the Cooperative Project of Desjardins in Quebec permeated by

the social doctrine of the Catholic church, etc.), we can infer the enactment of previous acts of reflection, where proposed values emerged along emancipated collectivities capable of exercising freedom and responsibility. As George Lasserre declares (while studying the 'revolution' that cooperative rules and principles represent),: they "express the will to moralize economic life and the exigencies of its entrepreneurs responsibilities" (Lasserre, 1967).

In a suggestive analysis, Daniel Côte stresses that cooperative values and identity drive creative learning and loyalty that constitute sources of advantage for associations, even on the pressure of extreme structural competition. The authenticity of CE, the coherence of its orientations, its humanistic inspiration, might create new organizational paradigms that without ignoring the managerial expertise, embrace the ideas of ethical search and integral development (Gagnon, Girard, & Gervais, 2003).

The initiatives proposed by and enacted through social economy enterprises not only nurture business ethics debates (by posing questions about power, economic logics, evaluation criteria, labor relations, etc.), but also emerge as potential benchmarks in the field, proposing ethical imaginaries that lead discussions and applied schemes for holistic improvement. Therefore, it is plausible to affirm that the virtuous cycle Ethics - Collective Enterprises - Integral Development is not only desirable but truly achievable.

6. Some dimensions of the SE, Ethics and Integral Development, elucidating a synergetic relationship

To demonstrate their mutually reinforcing potential this section examines the relationship between ethics and some of relevant theories and practices that inspire the collective enterprises of the social economy, procuring to elucidate their impact on the main dimensions of integral development.

6.1 The importance of the SE Theories, to promote Ethics and Integral development

Very significant inputs to ethics and to the relevance of integral development can be grasped from the social and economic theories that deal with the collective enterprises. If we recall the definitions of ethics “as a quest for meaningful individual answers and collective patterns of organizations” or as the “exploration of those presuppositions that support the definitions of what is considered as a good life”. The relevance of utopias and ideologies in collective dynamics has to be heightened -especially when we recall their mobilizing power and significant impact on individual and collectivities perception and factual engagement.

Both, the formulation of ideas and the adoption of ideals are conditioned by ideologies and utopias. Even eventual ethical quests are affected by aprioristic conceptions embedded in them. For example, when Hans Achterhuis discusses the notion of ‘responsibility’ demonstrates that fear and its underlying conceptions constitute important driving forces that might condition definitions of progress and even open the way to pedagogic dictatorships, thus reducing the scope of reflection and discussion (Achterhuis, 1993).

In order to enable ourselves to seek “the best informed decisions and actions and to consider an ample array of points of view” as ethics theories suggest, awareness about the contents of social and economic theories might enhance our capability for ethical reflection. The theoretical perspectives that deal with the SE introduce new questions and new areas of concern based on moral assumptions of what is good and desirable. The examination of these theories will lead to a deeper understanding of the moral notions introduced by the social economy. Although these moral notions and principles do not necessarily have to be shared, they should be

included in a wider exploration of new bases for action.

From this point of view, the axiological stands behind the utopian projects and their trajectories (as explained by Desroche 1976), or the Socio-Christian and Socialist models (as described by Desroche 1983), or the dreams of a totally cooperative economy founded on democratic practices of their users, (as theorized by Charles Gide and François Angers (Angers, 1976); can be interpreted so that learning can be discerned and better decisions can be made regarding the desirable futures.

As Benoit Lévesque affirms “when rethinking the economy and society, it seems of interest to confront the potential diverse scenarios”. His ideas of confronting scenarios are certainly ‘ethical’ in the sense that promote open questioning, and the spectrum of several choices and the corresponding visions and values supporting those choices. Lévesque, while stating the importance of enacting democratic procedures to regulate social and economic relations (i.e. employment and consumption relations) insists on the significance of creating the spaces for emerging arrangements (Lévesque, 1997).

On general terms we might say that the concrete actions and implemented theories of the CE that conform the SE, regardless of their differences - Cooperatives, Third Sector, Different Generations of the Social Economy, Solidarist Economy, etc-, all contribute to enhance the plural conceptions of the economy (Laville, 2003). Those conceptions not only spur ethical prisms, but favor mixed economic realities.

The following table summarizes many of the achievements derived of implementing SE projects, indicating their respective contribution to each dimension of integral development.

Table 1. Integral Development, satisfying needs and aspirations

<p style="text-align: center;">Interior Individual</p> <p>Emotional Needs Sensibility Awareness New cognitive experiences Less market alienation - Identity Scenarios for altruism and cooperation. Proximity services – human relations prevail upon impersonal market links.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Exterior Individual</p> <p>Physiological of needs Dignified employment Health services, nutrition Moderate consumption Income – Food – Clothing - Shelter Adaptability More choices</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Interior Collective</p> <p>Solidarity Symbolic links Conscience taking, responsibility assumption. Effective Sense of belonging Reciprocity, Sharing Hope Non exploitative relationships Affection – Mutual understanding Less marginalization and discrimination Social involvement Deliberative democracy, to produce superior and justifiable goods.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Exterior Collective</p> <p>Recontextualizing the debate (beyond the reductionist scope of economics). Institutions to promote welfare: Networks, partnerships state-civil society Democratic decision making (plural: representative, direct, social) Plural criteria of success Environment-wise consumption patterns. Proper market relations Redistributive policies. Mastery of society upon the economy. Stakeholder governance Health systems Reduction of violence Smart Supplies, markets and division of labor.</p>

As the previous table illustrates, the implementation of collective enterprises and many other projects within the realm of the SE enable the satisfaction of several types of needs and aspirations that people might have. Since social and economic initiatives are closer to people, it is easier to satisfy both, their individual and collective concerns at the interior and exterior dimensions.

6.2 The pertinence of the SE for ethical and integral development

The way in which the CE of the SE conceive and promote development, questioning and complementing the traditional actions that the market and state enact, deserves special attention from the perspective of ethics and integrality.

Like Louis Favreau demonstrates, the Social Economy “has ended the eclipse of several decades, displaying a potential for the development of new forms of democratic regulation, identity and social benefits” (Favreau, 2002). According to his ideas, the concept of social economy helps to articulate multiple and diverse initiatives issued from popular and informal origins, social movements, labor unions, NGOs, churches, etc.

On similar grounds Benoît Lévesque states that, even at the international scale, “the social and solidarist economy allows the construction of collective interests upon the recognition of individuals as persons, the passage into the general interest will come as new solidaristic links are threaded” (Lévesque, 2001). A more

comprehensive general interest will be achieved as synergetic relationships are consolidated with the public and private sector, enlarging the vision and spreading decision making innovations (e.g. like Lévesque suggests, a plural democracy is required to match the plural economy).

Since conceptions about what is socially desirable and what is responsible behavior diverge among discrete entities and societies, it is necessary to articulate the regulatory levels. In other words, the considerations of what individuals, organizations and society deem as appropriate should be examined in a deliberative process guided by ethical principles and integral awareness. The highest possible general interest should be the result of such a dialogue, where indicators like the ones used by the SEAAR (Social and Ethic Accounting, Auditing and Reporting) should be improved in order to integrate the four quadrants of development.

Regardless of geographical differences and even though historical particularities alter the socio-political contexts, the challenges for human beings are universally shared; aspirations and needs are fundamentally the same. Therefore solidaristic sensitivity constitutes the natural consequence of enlarged awareness, especially in today's global world where mutual causalities abound. Conversely the responsibility of transversal problems should be shared, as well as their solutions. Here, once again, CE can contribute to a more human globalization, enriching the model of integral development by sharing experiences and installing global cooperation.

The transversal approach of the social economy, its inclusive features, and political openness, makes of it a magnificent scenario to foster ethical approaches to integral development. Ethical discernment of needs and aspirations, at all dimensions (individual-collective, interior-exterior), can be fostered through the social economy postulates of people over profits.

7. Ethics and Evaluation Procedures

« ...il importe de se poser la question du jugement à poser en fonction de l'intérêt commun planétaire découlant de l'hégémonie de la civilisation capitaliste. Un intérêt commun imposé dans et par l'actualisation de la matrice de la mondialité. L'abc de cet intérêt commun repose sur des principes et des valeurs modernes dites universelles : la justice, l'autonomie, le droit, la liberté, l'égalité... ; il repose aussi sur des ententes formelles : les différentes chartes des droits individuels et des droits collectifs ; il défend enfin des ordres : ceux de la liberté de marché, de la démocratie représentative, de l'identité et de la souveraineté culturelles ».

Jean-Marc Fontan (2001 : 13),
L'évaluation de cinquième génération

Since the evaluative dimension is an appropriate instance to examine results and check outputs, this section states its importance by recognizing how CE have favored the emergence of new paradigms of wealth representation and creation, and the subjective dimensions of well being. In this sense, denounces gathered and published by SE specialist like Abdou Salam and Cheikh Guèye help prepare the way for better indicators. For example they fustigate the privileges given to mercantilist indicators, while ignoring qualitative factors like the sense that social actors give to their actions and life, as well as the ignorance of social and cultural values (Salam & Guèye, 2003).

The findings of evaluation processes should not be just a matter of theoretical speculation; they should become useful instruments to measure the real impact of CE and serve to enrich the integral frames of reference that should enhanced basis for posterior action. Pragmatic applications can be seen in the spheres of responsible financing, management practices, governance predispositions, institutional and organizational regulation, and coordination and ultimately in theorizing about the whole of the economy and integral development.

The analysis of the progression of the methods of research evaluation unveils a developmental trend towards increasing ethical awareness. Contemporary approaches or *Fifth Generation Evaluation* (Fontan, 2001). Implement what can be seen as an ethical search and dialogue that acknowledges and integrates the plurality of stakeholders' values and definitions of well being. The evaluation of Fifth Generation constitutes a development in the sense that it transcends and integrates previous evaluation standards that focus on partial dimensions of performance.

Initial concerns for measurement and generalization (first generation), emphasis on objective appraisals (second generation), interest for using results, (third) and for the negotiation of the evaluative process (fourth) are all included in a higher level of assessment that opens the spectrum to wider social, political and ethical considerations. With the fifth generation even new epistemic horizons arise, as the problematic of research opens up to include more radical questions such as wider perimeters of solidarity and longer term impacts of diverse issues such as values and subjective concerns.

Since evaluation is essentially an "interpretative and judgmental act" (Fontan 2001, p. 12) that needs a wider scale of values than just those based on the particularities of finite collectives, Fontan suggests that ultimate evaluation should question the range of interests and the principles upon which the common interest are defined. These ideas invite to exceed conventional approaches to evaluation and to transcend technical frames, thus opening the

way to more integral and ethical approaches. This perspective reinvigorates the utopian dimension of social economy initiatives in order to promote the importance of ethics and integral development.

The importance of ethical prisms becomes vital, given the fact that the evaluation processes required for CE demand intense questioning of the practices and auscultation of the values (freedom, justice, equality, etc.) that permeate the setting of results. In order to implement proper evaluation, it is necessary to understand and to promote commitments among the expectations of stakeholders. The literature about the evaluation dimension of SE provides abundant evidence on correlatives to ethical perspectives and clear connections with the aspirations to achieve integral development (Bouchard, Lévesque, & Bourque, 2001), (Bouchard et al., 2003), (Perret, 2003), (Zuniga, 2001).

Probably the most important conclusion we can draw regarding the evaluative dimension refers to the fact that it should be designed according to integral criteria and should follow ethical procedures. Evaluation should guide wiser governance and management structures in order to promote more human-friendly organizations, as well as transparent social regulation systems. Evaluation should support long term learning of CE so, they could increasingly acknowledge and satisfy all dimensions of being (i.e. the four quadrants of Wilber or the nine basic needs of Max-Neef).



Conclusiones

Michel Marengo entitles its introductory chapter 'Cooperativism, a Future Project (*Le Coopérativism Un project d'avenir*) with a enticing question: "why should one take the time to think and to interrogate oneself? (Marengo, 2003). The question proves to be quite pertinent in multiple contexts nowadays, when globalizing market dynamics seem to hinder the emergence of a truly plural economy and push many social and collective enterprises to the dilemma of de-naturalization or disappearance. Additionally, biased economic postulates invade other spheres of life destroying the coherence of meaning and slowing down the possibilities for integral development.

In this stance, ethics characterized by its inquisitive attitude appears as beneficial in several senses: 1) It emerges a good antidote against the pressures for isomorphism that attempt against the specificities of collective enterprises; 2) It nourishes new ideals to orient future actions; 3) As suggested by the relations proposed in this paper, synergetic potential among Integral Development and Social Economy gains solid rooting through ethics.

Given the fact that CE tend to behave more ethically than conventional capitalist companies, and that they overcome the risks of economic fragmentation by not concentrating on profits, it is plausible to draw inspiration from them and to inform conceptions about socio-economic organization.

Thus, an unavoidable conclusion emerges: It is necessary to pursue the good ideas about ethics and ID, by means of implementing the postulates of the social economy. It is important to emulate the good examples of CE, guided by their ethical actions and concern for ID. Even though utopian, the big gap that separate us from a 'better world' makes compulsory the quest for a virtuous loop.

Having in mind the endeavors (past, present, and future) of the social economy, we shall praise its contributions to a more integral development and exemplary ethical stands. Of course we also have to acknowledge the imperfections of its proposals and implementations, as well as the contingencies and threats to be faced during the long journey yet to be traversed. Nevertheless, since the contributions of the social economy have proven to be irreplaceable in the lately convulsive world settings, we invite practitioners to continue materializing their utopia and avoiding de-naturalization as they draw inspiration on Don Quixote's words:

*This is my quest, to follow that star ...
No matter how hopeless, no matter how far ...
To fight for the right, without question or pause ...
To be willing to march into Hell, for a Heavenly cause ...*

*And I know if I'll only be true, to this glorious quest,
That my heart will lie will lie peaceful and calm,
when I'm laid to my rest ...
And the world will be better for this:
That one man, scorned and covered with scars,
Still strove, with his last ounce of courage,
To reach ... the unreachable star ...*

From Man of LaMancha
Lyrics by Joe Darion

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