

Agenda: Session 3. Sociology 929. The Social Economy. September 15, 2010

The two faces/models of the Social Economy: partners vs activists; extension of the state vs alternative; community enterprise vs social enterprise

1. Many of the descriptions of cases make SEOs seem somewhat like capitalist firms or at least not anticapitalist, although a few of the cases – like in Brazil – do seem to be posed in anticapitalist terms. What really is the potential for SEOs to pose anticapitalist possibilities? (Michael)
2. partnerships: How to understand when they advance or undermine autonomy of SEOs. (Taylan)
3. How should we understand the relationship between the two implicit models of the SE in the readings – the “business school” model and the “activism and political engagement” model? (Nate)
4. Is there a tendency for community enterprises to become social enterprises, losing their activist character? Can social enterprises – without real political purposes – still have political impacts? (Eunhee)

SEOs and class/capitalism

5. SEOs and class: how do SEOs contribute to organizing surplus populations into class formations? More generally: how do SEOs affect the relationship of people to the class structure? (Lindsey)
6. A number of chapters refer to “unpaid labor” – how is this really different from small capitalist firms? (Michael)

Explaining emergence & expansion of SEOs

7. Can we distill from the experiences presented in the book general theories of emergence and expansion of the social economy? (Joao)
8. What is the role of ideology in explaining the expansion of the SE? (Ayca)

The State and Social Economy

9. How dependent upon the state is the SE if it is to grow and expand? (Emanuel)
10. Why does a systematic network integration of the SE emerge in some places and not others? Is the state critical for this to happen? (Trevor)
11. Is the SE basically an “extension of the state” as part of neoliberalism and the commodification of services? (Ayca)
12. What strategies are available to activists when the state uses the social economy to reduce welfare? (Joo-hee)

Miscellaneous

13. Need for a unified political voice for social economy: is this a good idea? (Matt)
14. Pay of SEO workers: is it unfair for them to be paid less than workers in private sector firms and the state? (Taylan)
15. To what extent has globalization stimulated or/and undermined the social economy? (Joao)
16. There are two competing ideas of the social economy in the readings: defined by *how* they produce (cooperatives) and defined by *what* they produce (producing to satisfy needs). (Nina)
17. Is there a tension between the issue of the quality of services being delivered and the mobilizing capacity of associations – professionalization vs mobilization? (Lindsey)
18. How is the learning by doing, experimentalism of SEOs different from capitalist firms? (Michael)
19. How are the qualitative aspects of social impact evaluated in order to create real accountability (social audits)? (Eunhee)