

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEBATE ON THE AGENDAS OF THE SOCIAL ECONOMY IN THE CULTURE OR TURKEY

CONTRIBUIÇÕES PARA O DEBATE SOBRE AS AGENDAS DA ECONOMIA SOCIAL NA CULTURA DA TURQUIA

CONTRIBUTIONS AU DÉBAT SUR L'AGENDA DE L'ÉCONOMIE SOCIALE DANS LA CULTURE DE LA TURQUIE

CONTRIBUCIONES AL DEBATE SOBRE LA AGENDA DE ECONOMÍA SOCIAL EN LA CULTURA DE TURQUÍA

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ABSTRACT: Globalization of the economy and the dynamics of the market mechanism have brought about numerous problems for both individuals and society in general. Environmental problems, lack of sufficient information being conveyed between market and consumers, lack of information concerning the processes of producing etc. are the examples of the problems that are brought about by the market mechanism. Alternative economic practices are being constituted by individuals in various forms of association such as collectives, entrepreneurs etc. in order to cope with those problems mainstream capitalist economy caused through creating social values for the common good. The concept of solidarity economy is being adopted in the article in order to indicate these alternative economic practices; and the main of this article is to shed light on the solidarity patterns of the activities relied on nonmainstream economy within the scope of some cases in the light of four cases from Turkey.

Keywords: solidarity economy, nonmainstream economy, social value, alternative economy.

RESUMO: A globalização da economia e as dinâmicas do mecanismo de mercado têm trazido inúmeros problemas aos indivíduos e a sociedade em geral. Os problemas ambientais, a falta de informação suficiente entre o mercado e os consumidores, o lapso informacional sobre os processos de produção, etc., são exemplos dos problemas que os mecanismos de mercado suscitam. Práticas econômicas alternativas estão sendo constituídas por indivíduos em várias formas de associação, como coletivos, empreendedores, etc., a fim de lidar com os problemas que a economia capitalista dominante causou através da criação de valores sociais para o bem comum. O conceito de economia solidária está sendo adotado neste artigo a fim de indicar essas práticas econômicas alternativas com o objetivo de lançar luz sobre os padrões de solidariedade das atividades baseadas na economia não convencional no âmbito de quatro casos na Turquia.

Palavras-chave: economia solidária, economia não convencional, valor social, economia alternativa.

RÉSUMÉ: La globalisation de l'économie et la dynamique du mécanisme du marché ont apporté de nombreux problèmes aux individus et à la société en général. Les problèmes environnementaux, le manque d'informations suffisantes entre le marché et les consommateurs, le manque d'informations sur les processus de production, etc. sont des exemples de problèmes que les mécanismes du marché soulèvent. Des pratiques économiques alternatives sont constituées par des individus sous diverses formes d'association, telles que des collectifs, des entrepreneurs, etc., afin de faire face aux problèmes que l'économie capitaliste dominante a causés en créant des valeurs sociales pour le bien commun. Le concept d'économie solidaire est adopté dans cet article afin d'indiquer ces pratiques économiques alternatives dans le but de mettre en lumière les modèles de solidarité des activités basées sur l'économie non conventionnelle dans le cadre de quatre cas en Turquie.

Mots-clés: économie solidaire, économie non conventionnelle, valeur sociale, économie alternative.

RESUMEN: La globalización de la economía y la dinámica del mecanismo de mercado han traído numerosos problemas a los individuos y la sociedad en general. Los problemas ambientales, la falta de información suficiente entre el mercado y los consumidores, la brecha de información en los procesos productivos, etc., son ejemplos de los problemas que plantean los mecanismos del mercado. Las prácticas económicas alternativas están siendo formadas por individuos en diversas formas de asociación, como colectivos, empresarios, etc., para hacer frente a los problemas que la economía capitalista dominante ha provocado al crear valores sociales para el bien común. El concepto de economía solidaria se está adoptando en este artículo con el fin de indicar estas prácticas económicas alternativas con el fin de arrojar luz sobre los patrones solidarios de actividades basadas en la economía no convencional en el contexto de cuatro casos en Turquía.

Palabras-clave: economía solidaria, economía no convencional, valor social, economía alternativa.

1. Conceptual framework

It would be appropriate to commence first with how the solidarity economy can be defined and how it can be differentiated from other economic activities. There are some conceptual difficulties concerning to define economic activities that focus on the social common good and that are apart from mainstream market economy whose primary aim is to make profit (Bravo, 2016). These economic activities, distinct from the market economy in most cases, are being conceptualized by different terms such as social entrepreneurship, alternative economy, DIY economy, social economy, solidarity economy etc. and those definitions may be used interchangeably (Öztürk, 2013; Baglione & Schlüter, 2010; Santos, 2009; Hoogendoorn *et al.*, 2010). Along with the diversity of concepts and beyond them, these kind of activities should be understood in a broad sense since these are not solely the activities based on the economic interests but are the response to the market mechanism that cannot meet the conditions of a desirable society. Environmental problems, lack of sufficient information conveyed between market and consumers, lack of information concerning the processes of production etc. are the examples of the problems of the market mechanism (Ikemoto & Matsuni, 2015: 3).

To define the solidarity economy is not an easy task since the characteristic of a solidarity economic activity is based on the local social conditions and cultural contexts although social issues of today may not easily be considered apart from globalization (Öztürk, 2013). Yet, even though making a conceptual definition of solidarity economy is not easy, it can be explained as the pursuit of economic, social and environmental goals by ventures such as cooperative, self-managed companies, community oriented projects, and non-profit organisations focusing upon the social issues such as democratization of the social structure, pollution, ecology, human health, inequality, problems of disadvantaged individuals etc. (Haugh, 2007; Notz, 2017). As Dacheux and Goujon suggested (2012: 205), solidarity economy is a counter-movement toward the global economy that detracts the human from the center in the interest of actors of the global market economy, seeking to put the human and cultural diversity again at the center of the economy which means the “democratization of the economy” that may result in a more democratic world. From this point, it can be suggested that, as a nonmainstream economic activity, solidarity economy can be used as a generic term in order to refer to the ventures focusing on the social and environmental issues, even sometimes irrespective of whether they make profit or not. For, being socially responsible, doing social good and making a profit may not be composing mutually exclusive position (Hoogendoorn *et al.*, 2010).

As Pearce pointed (as cited in Quiroz – Nino & Muga – Menoyo, 2017: 2 - 3), economic systems can be classified by their values, principles, priorities, and their aims to be fulfilled by the people and organizations. According to this, three types of economic systems can be addressed: (1) the private; (2) the public; and (3) the social. The first type of economic system refers to the private sector and its basic aim is to make profit in the market economy. The second type contains the institutions of public service. The third one, the social economic system, is being identified by solidarity and principles of reciprocity. The distinctive characteristics of the social economic system are depended on the purpose and the actors of it. In this context, the actors of the social economic system are largely – it is said largely because, as can be seen in the samples given below, some activities of solidarity economy can be created by private entrepreneurs or jointly with public initiatives that yet their main purpose is not to make profit - civil society whose members are seeking the common good, good living, to protect nature and environment, to make the

information flow possible between producer and consumer, to call for equality and solidarity etc. Solidarity economy usually involves the small-scale local efforts and encompasses wide range of microeconomic ventures from creating a local social currency to organic farming cooperatives, consumption cooperatives, collective kitchens (Santos, 2009; Dacheux & Goujon, 2012: 206).

Globalization of the economy and the dynamics of the market mechanism have brought about numerous problems for both individuals and society in general. As Mindt and Reickmann suggested (as cited in Quiroz – Nino & Muga – Menoyo, 2017: 1), current economic system causes both destruction of nature, climate change and social injustice along with the various forms of problems individuals have to face. In order to overcome these problems or failures of the market mechanism, which can be listed as increasing gap between individuals, ignorance of nature issues, increasing poverty, alienating individuals from their altruistic nature etc., some various activities emerge which can be conceptualized as ‘solidarity economy’. Thus, solidarity economy is beyond solely being a set of economic activities in a traditional sense, it is an interactional situation between individuals based not only on economic interests but also on altruism and solidarity. In addition, Frère (2019) identified four categories in one of which solidarity economy can be placed: (1) Micro level credit and savings providing financial support for micro-alternative companies; (2) Alternative trading exchange systems used by community – based groups in order to make transactions by means of non – monetarily swaps including decorating services, language teaching, child – care etc.; (3) Associations and groups who seek to sustain organic, ecologic agriculture and distribution and its actors; (4) proximity services such as helping for older people, improving public space, generating local recycling brought about by neighborhood cooperatives, urban initiatives, hobbyists’ network and cultural organizations.

Although relating solely to entrepreneurship not to social entrepreneurship, Gartner (1985) points to the need of criteria through which ventures can be classified and compared to each other, thus diversities of ventures can be discovered with reference to the similarities and differences between them. Although these classification tools suggested by Gartner (1985) seem to be primarily for ventures pursuing economic profits, it can be broadened and utilized to both understand and interpret the activities of solidarity economy. This conceptualizing consists of: (1) individual(s) which refers to the background, experience, and attitudes of the entrepreneur; (2) process is related, generally speaking, to what the entrepreneur does and how she does so; (3) environment involves the factors triggering the emergence of a venture; (4) organization points to the characteristics of the entrepreneurship in terms, for instance, of whether it is manufacturing, service, retail or wholesale etc. (Gartner, 1985).

As Hoogendoorn *et al.* (2010) suggested, social entrepreneurs might be classified and assessed by four different paradigms, noting also that it is difficult to differentiate these paradigms or schools of thought with certain boundaries. To briefly summarize, the Innovation School, firstly, focuses on the individuals who seek to produce solution for social problems in an innovative way and they can make it by either nonprofit or for-profit enterprises. Secondly, the Social Enterprise School is being described as the ventures which are completely nonprofit and have a fundamental principle in terms of non-distribution of profits. Since it can have positive contribution to effectiveness, adopting business methods, according to this school, is a favorable idea for the success of organizations. Another approach which tries to identify social enterprises is being called The Emergence of Social Enterprise in Europe (EMES). According to the EMES approach, a social

enterprise is an initiative who is lunched by a group of citizens, has an agenda for the common good, is highly participatory, is horizontally constituted, allows for limited distribution of profit, and its decision making process is not based on capital ownership. The types of organizations such as cooperatives, associations, foundations can be sorted within this approach (Hoogendoorn *et al.*, 2010; Defourny, 2013). Finally, UK approach defines social enterprises as 'businesses with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximize profits for shareholders and owners.' (as cited in Hoogendoorn *et al.*, 2010: 9).

As is seen, these approaches above, in a Weberian sense, can be considered as ideal types of social enterprises which means that a venture with the aim(s) of social benefit may have the characteristics fitting into one approach or more than one approaches simultaneously. However, besides all the distinctions between these approaches, it can easily be claimed that the creation of social value and solving a social problem are the common ground these entire approaches share (Bravo, 2016). From Simmelian formal sociological perspective, meeting social needs that are not met by the market economy by creating social value is the form of the social enterprises and they may only differ from each other by how they act within this form. Accordingly, it can be suggested that the motivation underlying solidarity economy is the hope for a better world in where inequality, hierarchy, alienation and exploitation take no place (Notz, 2017: xii). As can be seen from some cases from Turkey discussed below, the actors of social enterprises may have different agendas although their shared principle aim of creating and maintain social value never changes.

The main aim of this article is to shed light on the solidarity patterns of the activities relied on nonmainstream economic activity within the scope of some cases in Turkey which will be presenting below, rather than focusing on the ways of the economic organization of the cases. In that context, the article argues the forms of the association of the actors of the solidarity economy as cultural formations. Thus, the article seeks to shed light on the multilateral agenda of the actors of solidarity economy included in the study, demonstrating that micro activities around the ethos of solidarity economy cannot be restricted to a given contestation area. Hence, that they should be considered in a broader sense since a solidarity economic actor might be resisting in various fields with the various aims to the dominant social constitution that brings about some social and political problems at once such as ecological issues, human health, economic inequality, gender inequality etc. by creating, offering, and implementing alternative social values apart from the hegemonic ones.

In this article, solidarity economy will be used as the concept in order to refer nonmainstream alternative economic activities within the article since it is considered that solidarity economy presents a broader conceptual framework which is both more accurate regarding the aims of it and less evocative of conventional economic activities seeking to have individualistic profit. As Notz (2017) suggested, solidarity economy can be in evidence through various ways such as bookstores, publishing and printing houses, art groups, consulting and training facilities etc. Solidarity economy in Turkey can also be seen, but not limited, in forms of like ecological farming, art houses, ecological collectivities, self-managed ventures focusing upon the relationship between human and nature, and community supported publishing. The following sections of the article include, after the methodology, four cases that are given a place within the study and the analyzing of these cases

in the context of their own dynamics such as aims and actors in order to provide an insight concerning solidarity economy in Turkey.

2. Methodology

Qualitative research method was adopted in order to obtain data from the field. The reason of adopting such a research strategy is that it can provide more detailed and accurate data concerning the experiences of the research objects so as to build elaborate sociological perspective. As Denzin and Lincoln suggested (1998: 3 - 8), qualitative research is a useful strategy that enables the researcher to study how “social experience is created and given meaning” and that provides the researcher with empirical materials in order to illuminate the everyday activities, routines, ‘problematic moments’, and meanings in individuals’ lives. Some of these empirical materials are case study, personal experience, interview, visual text, and observation of all which help to explain the reality socially constructed by individuals’ points of view. Thus, to study the attributed meanings of individuals to their activities illuminates the social reality that is constructed upon these activities, and thus reveals the ways of sociation of different social groups and the forms of their divergence, convergence, and articulation experiences with regard to social structure. Therefore, the study, using the qualitative data related to the cases it researches, seeks to comprehend the dynamics of the solidarity economy that is relatively a new social phenomenon, with reference to the experiences of the actors of this economy.

This study is depended upon the data obtained from four ventures of solidarity economy in Turkey whose names are Kadıköy Cooperative, Eppek, Arthereİstanbul, and The Kitchen of Woman Refugees (TKOWR)¹. In that context, face-to-face in-depth interviews were carried out with three collective actors of solidarity economy in Turkey, İstanbul which are Kadıköy Cooperative, Eppek, and Arthereİstanbul. TKOWR was interviewed by sending the research questions and taking back the detailed answers through email from the one who is both one of the founders and volunteers of TKOWR. In addition to in-depth interviews, other qualitative indirect data sources such as web pages, social media accounts, and internet videos containing interviews with the actors of the solidarity economy were drew on with the aim of to comprehend their various micro activities around the notion of solidarity economy.

3. Bread case of solidarity: ‘Eppek’

The word is ‘Eppek’ is a witty usage of the word ‘Ekmek’ in Turkish which means ‘Bread’ in English. ‘Eppek’ is an individual enterprise which has been brought into life in 2016 by a married couple who had had a professional occupation before the venture of Eppek. The interviewee said that:

After a health problem which was caused by the nutritional habits and indoor working conditions, I resigned and settled in a farm that is engaged in organic agriculture.

This farm is also the place they buy one of their flours that they use in order to make a bread today. This farm is engaged in an organic agriculture which they called ‘wise peasant agriculture’, containing some old-school farming technics such as dealing with the insects producing curative by stinging nettle or garlic rather than using chemical pesticide. Alongside of this farm, Eppek is connected with other organic wheat producers from other cities in Turkey such as Çankırı, Antalya,

¹ Acronym of the author.

Çanakkale. This social interaction and 'sociation', in Simmelian perspective (Wolf, 1950: 9 – 10), between actors of solidarity economy is crucial since it ensures the maintenance of the activities of this economy based on the spirit of the idea of solidarity.

At first, the entrepreneurs of Eppek commence making their own bread from the organic flours at home just for themselves. Later, they come to be known by their social circle and take orders from those who would like to consume healthy and organically produced bread. Before opening a store, they were conveying the breads to consumers distributing them on agreed date and place. The entrepreneurs of Eppek highlight the need of the direct relation and interaction between producer, seller and consumer which is one of the main characteristics of the solidarity economy who focuses on health issues related to nutrition and organic farming. As the interviewee stated:

We provide our customer with the names and the addresses of the producers we work with so that they can go visit them and see how their bread is being produced. This is the transparency that we would love to provide. They can also work voluntarily on harvest season and help the workers of the farms and I think it is significant for solidarity.

To provide consumers, unlike mainstream market economy, with the opportunity to have the information about production process constitutes a mutual trust between the producer and the consumer. Besides, this principle of transparency enables the consumer to have control on and be involved in the production process, and to construct an interaction with the product she consumed. Eppek is in cooperation with small growers which are not easy to find out but at that point communication between the actors of solidarity economy becomes significant both in terms of solidarity economy itself and of the actors supporting each other within this economy. As the interviewee pointed out:

To reach these small growers seemed impossible at the beginning. However, the owner of the farm I was working voluntarily helped me to reach to other small growers of wheat who doesn't use any chemical. So, we went out for a 'wheat tour' which was quite long. They gave me some other names who are also small growers using 'ancestry seed'. That is to say, we found out the producers in the field...

It should be added that these small growers are household producers. However, as it can be seen, they don't produce only for themselves and for their consumption (Ironmonger, 2000: 3). However, at the same time, they don't produce for mass market, either. In that context, being able to reach and interact with each other is crucial both for entrepreneurs and small growers since these interrelations between the actors are inherent to solidarity economy. In this regard, it is crucial whether these growers are able to constitute an interaction and whether they are located in a place that is convenient for this interaction. As the interviewee suggested:

the small growers who have connection with the city are luckier than the ones who do not have in terms of selling their products. That's why today the production of ancestry seed is quite limited.

Environmental awareness comes into prominence in the case of Eppek as in other samples of solidarity economy. It is obvious in the way they produce their bread by using organic or ancestry seed wheat bought from small growers. Besides, there are some other solidarity practices which arise from the interaction between Eppek and its customer which doesn't seem possible in the system of market economy. For instance, as the interviewee stated:

We are buying organic egg from one of our small producers. They send us these eggs in a cardboard box and we sell them to our customer in these boxes. We ask our customer for bringing the boxes back after they are done with it. So, both the producer, we, and customer can use the same boxes continually and, in this way, we can contribute to prevent waste and to protect environment.

4. Kadıköy Cooperative

Kadıköy² Cooperative has been legitimized in 2016. However, its emergence as an idea is depended on the neighborhood solidarity groups, that have been constituted after Gezi Movement, whose agenda is that, as the interviewee suggested:

We needed a cooperative because agricultural policy in Turkey has been changing not for good. The only model of egalitarian and democratic collective structuring was to constitute a cooperative.

Even before the cooperative was legitimized, the core team of the cooperative was playing an active role by distributing the products of small growers making ecologic farming in the given area of the city by the ecological concerns. The cooperative is a consumer cooperative and the products are being sold in the store of the cooperative at the lowest price. The cooperative does only add extra price on the products to afford some outcomes such as taxes, transport, rent, and bills. The main purpose of such kind of pricing is to cover the outcome of the cooperative, not to earn profit. The cooperative doesn't add any extra price on the products from the disadvantageous groups such as women (e. g. jams from The Kitchen of Refugee Women; fabric wallets and bags hand-made by African women migrants), and former convicted. Besides, they pay for the items from these disadvantaged people not when the items sold but in advance. The interviewee underlines the altruistic structure of the cooperative which is shared by the members of it:

We don't pursue individual economic profit. We consider ourselves as a part of the solidarity economies in the world... I put myself after the cooperative. I every time tell my other friends in the cooperative that in case there is a problem in the process of preparing the products such as lack of money in the cashbox let me know about it and we can deal with it between us... When we are organized, it would give a pleasure in a different level. I go to the store of the cooperative, empty the trash, clean it from the floor to rest room. I do all of these with love. I am aware that if I reach and sell the products of these small growers, she would be schooling her child(ren) easier. That's the point of the solidarity economy.

Kadıköy Cooperative has five principles or social interests of which each one of them is a fundamental element of the solidarity economy. According to the interviewee, 'nourishment is a contestation area' (Interviewee 2 Kadıköy, Female) and all these principles of the cooperative is concerning to protecting environment, consuming healthy food, and reconstructing the relationship between human and nature for common good: (1) Ecologic farming; (2) solidarity with the small growers who make ecologic agriculture, and ecologic relations; (3) solidarity *in a broad sense*; (4) reciprocity (relations between producer and consumer based on mutual trust and initiative); (5) democratic organization and equal decision making.

Concerning gender relations of the cooperative, it should be suggested that majority in the cooperative are women. According to the interviewee, the reason of that women are higher in

² Kadıköy is a district in İstanbul.

number than that of men is that women develop more positive relation to nature than men, and also, maybe more importantly, that they are much more in need of being in solidarity than men. As she stated:

The need of women and men to be organizing politically, especially when the ecology is at stake, can be different. Women are always at the forefront... Women are always more reactional than men against harming the nature. I don't know what is wrong with men...

There is a priority of women in the agenda of the cooperative. Thus, solidarity between women is being seemed more significant. The interviewee tells about it as follows:

When we find a woman cooperative to be in solidarity, it makes us happier. We take an action quickly and contact with them in terms of what they produce, how they produce etc.

There is also a subunit within the cooperative consisting of solely women which pays attention only to women issues and seeks the solution to the problems they are informed about through solidarity. It should also be noted, concerning gender regime, that women actors of the cooperative act completely independent from the men in the cooperative in terms of women issues. In this context, it can be suggested that those who are able to speak on behalf of women are only women.

One day we informed about that one of our friends was harassed by a security staff... We immediately mobilized to act with solidarity, found a lawyer, tried not to leave her alone and to make sure of if she was in need of psychological support etc. This women unit have such duties. When women unit decides, it is being sent by e-mail to all the members of the cooperative and men cannot discuss about this decision. They have to admit as it is...

5. The Kitchen of Refugee Women (Tkorw)

The collective organization of 'The Kitchen of Refugee Women' has been founded by Syrian women, migrated from Syria to Turkey, under the same roof of Okmeydanı³ Social Solidarity Association which is a neighborhood association previously founded by local Turkish women in order to deal with the local problems of the neighborhood; for instance, helping poor families, sharing second hand dresses etc. However, after massive migration from Syria to Turkey, the women who are the founder of the neighborhood association had met the immigrants and been a part of their compelling process of being an immigrant in a host country. Hence, the association have become an organization which started to meet the needs of Syrian immigrants and now these women immigrants are the active member of the association. The main aim of this solidarity is to incorporate women to production and, in this sense, improve economic condition of Syrian women immigrants. From this aim, the idea of constituting a kitchen has emerged and the kitchen has opened officially in 2017 and now it is in its process of being a cooperative.

This solidarity constituted between Turkish and Syrian women has multifold outputs in terms of both child rights and women visibility in public space that engenders a negotiation and change

³ A district in İstanbul.

in gender relations, although these are not primarily defined objectives of the Kitchen. As the interviewee suggested:

The life conditions of Syrian refugees in Okmeydanı is quite difficult. Anybody who is able to work, including children, were working as informally. The only ones who didn't work or were not allowed to work were women since it is not approved in their own culture. However, labor is an adults' responsibility, children should be going to school and play with their peers. When we asked women coming to our association regularly about what we could do together in solidarity, we did meet in common: meal, pickle, and jam... Some of our friends, who hesitated even to go out before, come to the Kitchen to work now leaving their children with their husbands.

As one of the Turkish women from the organization stated:

Women predominantly play an active role in this solidarity practice and the husbands of these Syrian women don't exist. They are said that they go work or they are ashamed that's why they don't attend to organization. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3VVZhbBKIA>).

It can be claimed from this statement that the participation of the Syrian immigrant women to the organization despite of the attitudes of their husband and turning their mundane unpaid domestic labor into a labor through which they are able to be improved socio-economically can be read as a resistance to patriarchy and hegemonic cultural structure which place women in a subordinated position. In addition, the main aim of the kitchen is not only to support these refugee women economically but to constitute intercultural dialogue between Turkey and Syria that is being needed especially in the times of high-intensity migration occurs. This aim based on the principle of solidarity is being described by one the members of the organization as follows:

These women have met by making jam and pickle... We, as the association, were considering of how we could maintain this solidarity, how we built up a life in that we live together with our Syrian neighbors... And now, The Kitchen of Refugee Women is an industrial kitchen with full of hope in where 17 women lead the way of miracles.

Products such as jam, pickle, regional food are being made by 17 Syrian women who escaped from the war in Syria and came to Turkey as a refugee. By this alternative economic organization, these refugee women are having an opportunity to improve their socioeconomic condition by means of selling their homemade products. The solidarity that the actors of the Kitchen seek to construct is relied also upon the cooperation with other local cooperatives, initiatives, and association. These products made by the women are being sold in various places such as their own association, kermis, other cooperative; for instance, Kadıköy Cooperative and Eppek that have been mentioned previously sells the products produced by refugee women in the Kitchen. It can be seen that human health is also considered by the organization. The organization noted that they would like to eat the food they can produce and share this healthy and clean food with the other residents of the neighborhood. It is highlighted by the members of 'the kitchen' that we should be avoid the self-interest since we need to do so for the common good.

6. Solidarity Meets Art: The Case Of 'Arthereistanbul'

ArtHereİstanbul, at first glance, can be considered a place in where only artistic activities take place. It would be a superficial understanding if the issues of how these artistic activities are being organized and what social values, which is the distinctive characteristic of solidarity economy, are being created through the aims of the place wouldn't be taken into consideration. Additionally,

ArtHereİstanbul does identify itself as an art-café in that homemade foods are being sold. However, the management of the café is non-mainstream since there is no one employed here. If the visitors of the ArtHereİstanbul would like to drink or eat something, they help themselves and leave the price, that is written on a list, in the box. It can be suggested that this way of running the café' is based on mutual trust between people thus it contributes to constitution and reinforcement of social sense of trust. Further, it also eliminates the hierarchical relations between the actors, for example between waiters and visitors. This might be seen as an insignificant symbolic level of the interaction; however, this symbolic interaction arises from and refers to the main principles, that are to be a democratic, nonhierarchical, and horizontal organization, through which the organization crates its form of 'sociation'.

ArtHereİstanbul has been founded by Syrian artist Omar Berakdar in 2015 in İstanbul, Yeldeğirmeni which is a district of the city whose rents for places were relatively low in first years following the opening of ArtHereİstanbul. However, a gentrification process has been initiated in that district especially since 2016 and now it is a challenging factor for the actor who seeks to field of practice with insufficient resources. The founder of the ArtHereİstanbul considers this process in an interview as follows:

There is a magnificent cosmopolite energy in here. Yeldeğirmeni is a very active district with its people, graffities, art studios, collective art places. At first, rents were reasonable in here... but within the last two years, the scene has completely changed in Yeldeğirmeni. Dozens of cafés have been opened of who have set forth with the idea of engaging in artistic activities and identified themselves as 'studio – café' (so as do we)... Unfortunately, it has brought about some costs. Yeldeğirmeni is a center of attraction now and rents are getting higher. It would be sad if Yeldeğirmeni would be considered by the people living here as expensive. (Sanaç, n.d.).

ArtHereİstanbul has been founded primarily, at least at the beginning, for Syrian artists, who migrated from Syria to Turkey due to the war and political upheavals in Syria, with the purpose of providing them with a studio for free, a ground to construct an artistic network and to continue performing their arts, and a place to both exhibit and to sell their works. Although it has been founded by the artists from Syria, it constitutes a common ground for Turkish artists as well. Thus, it can be suggested that ArtHereİstanbul is an inter-cultural juncture of Syrian and Turkish cultures which is also significant because a massive migration from Syria to Turkey has taken place since early 2012. ArtHereİstanbul have a characteristic of an answer to these political changes and of creating a social value which seeks to bring people from different cultures together by using the art as common ground:

I guess it is a reaction against the geopolitics changes, mass migrations, rigid politics about borders, wars, depressive international politics atmosphere, inequality, lack of freedom of speech... (Sanaç, n.d.).

The primary aim of the organization is not to make profit rather, as mentioned before, to create social value based on solidarity by using the field of art as common ground. The main income of the organization is being provided from selling the works of the artist; by this way while the organization can maintain itself – in terms of covering the rent and bills -, artists are being supported as well. Therefore, the main aim is to constitute social ground relying on solidarity. The solidarity between the actors is not based on directly financial support but social interaction. For instance, one of the Syrian artists who was interviewed stated that once he worked as an

interpreter from Turkish to Arabic in a biennial, that he found this opportunity through ArtHereİstanbul and he couldn't have had this otherwise. This demonstrates that the founding spirit of the organization is solidarity between the actors, especially immigrants, who may not have social, cultural, and economic resources in a market in that capitalist competitive values are dominant. More than that, the place of the organization hosts performers from diverse artistic field such as music, theater, poetry etc. from all over the world who would like to meet the people interested in their performances. The participation to these artistic events is for free as well as performers are not being paid for their performances. As the founder of ArtHereİstanbul emphasized:

The groups who come to our place and perform are not doing it for money but for themselves and for the community... It creates a great interaction between the artists and audiences (Sanaç, n.d.).

It can be asserted that the non-mainstream economic activities are at stake in the context of the organization and these activities are being utilized for the purpose of the organization that focuses upon creating social value rather than having economic profit.

7. Concluding remarks

Although the difficulties concerning how the solidarity economy should be defined, this article seeks to make an empirical contribution to the theoretical framework about the solidarity economy by means of the cases that are included in the study. The aforementioned four cases seek to create social values, implementing micro and alternative ways of constituting a collective economic and cultural practices based on solidarity which are neglected by the macro political and economical social structures. It can be suggested that the characteristics of solidarity economy is primarily based on the social and political dynamics of a society in a given time. However, it doesn't mean that global conjunctural dynamics don't have any influence in emergence of the actors of solidarity economy. In other words, it should be considered as an intertwined process which determines the primary characters and aims of the solidarity economic activities. The cases of ArtHereİstanbul and The Kitchen of Refugee Women do exemplify this feature of solidarity economy since these are the organization emerging in local so as to meet social need for the common good; however their emergence is based on the some global political dynamics such as inner conflict and war in Syria.

It should also be suggested that the actors of solidarity economy mentioned above act within the hegemonic economic structure by being alternatively articulated it. This requires, in the context of popular cultural approach, to utilize the mediums of the dominant along with the aims of creating social values that are neglected by the dominant. Various mediums at hand are being mobilized by the actors of the solidarity economy in accordance with the focuses of the organizations. Thus, the creation of social values by the actors of the solidarity economy is not limited to tangible activities but facilitated by technological information generating media such as Instagram and Facebook.

The spirit of solidarity economy is being constituted by resistance since it doesn't seek for the answers to the issues of undemocratic, hierarchical, and profit driven capitalist society but also undermines it. In that context, as Frère and Jacquemain suggested (2019), solidarity economy is a practical and moral as well as political movement that resists to the doings of dominant patriarchal

capitalism by means of its tangible concrete doings targeting the institutions who are normalizing and reproduce economic and political hegemony.

The scope of the solidarity economy cannot be limited to founder actors of organizations, associations, initiatives or ventures. Therefore, individuals who don't play an active role in constituting a solidarity economy and participate in it as a consumer can be considered as the part of this economy since they, somehow, organize their everyday life practices based on the tenets of solidarity which seeks to build a more democratic and sustainable world.

It can also be indicated that within the cases being incorporated into the study women seem to more active in the solidarity economy than men do. Thus, the claim of the feminization of the solidarity economy, avoiding a deterministic argument, can be suggested. Although it cannot be valid for all the cases included, two cases (Kadıköy Cooperative and TKORW) predominantly consist of women actors and incorporate the issues such as anti-patriarchy, feminism, gender equality into their agenda.

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