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Solidarity Economy in the context of the Nordic welfare state

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Abstract

Gabriel Esber Elias: Solidarity Economy in the context of the Nordic welfare state
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In debates over alternative economic practices to our current economic system, increased attention has been given to Solidarity Economy, a concept that encompasses a heterogeneous universe of self-managed enterprises led by the principles of democracy, equality, cooperation and a growing sense of environmental preservation. However, research has thus far largely focused on contexts of high social vulnerability and little attention has been given to the context of the Nordic welfare. This research identifies how the Nordic welfare enables and constrains the development of Solidarity Economy.

The research consists in qualitative data collected from semi-structured interviews with Solidarity Economy actors in Finland. The data is compiled into relevant themes with the support of thematic analysis. The themes are analyzed through the lens of structuration theory which was adopted as the theoretical framework due to its capability to unify structure and human agency. The research provides an extensive literature review of Solidarity Economy and a more clarified picture of the concept in Finland.

The analysis reveals that the high level of quality of life, as well as the public service provision, social security and certain infrastructure offered by the Nordic welfare can enhance the capability of individuals to promote Solidarity Economy. On the other hand, the same scenario may constrain the development of Solidarity Economy as it may produce the perception that systematic changes in the economy is not necessary.

Furthermore, the analysis suggests that the close relation between Finnish society and the state and the high amount of trust on the authorities may be a barrier to the development of Solidarity Economy. The lack of financial resources of Solidarity Economy enterprises is another identified aspect that can undermine the development of Solidarity Economy. On the other hand, alike movements, cooperatives and increase awareness of social and environmental issues may enable the scale up of Solidarity Economy through the construction of a more robust network.

Keywords: Solidarity Economy, Degrowth, post-capitalism, alternative economies,

self-management, Nordic welfare, Finland.

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Contents

- 1 Introduction 1
- 2 Solidarity Economy: an alternative paradigm for global societies 5
 - 2.1 The current dominant economic system and alternative economies 5
 - 2.2 The emergence, visibility and evolution of Solidarity Economy 6
 - 2.3 The concept of Solidarity Economy 8
 - 2.4 A broader sense of Solidarity Economy 10
 - 2.5 The importance of a pure framework 14
 - 2.6 Solidarity Economy and Degrowth 16
 - 2.7 The relevance to study Solidarity Economy in a Nordic country 18
- 3 Theoretical framework: structuration theory 21
 - 3.1 Why structuration theory 21
 - 3.2 Structuration Theory 21
 - 3.3 Structuration Theory and change 26
- 4 Data and method 28
 - 4.1 Data Collection 28
 - 4.2 Method of analysis 29
- 5 Analysis 35
 - 5.1 The identity of Solidarity Economy in Finland 35
 - 5.1.1 Engagement 36
 - 5.1.2 The motivations 38
 - 5.1.3 The name 40
 - 5.2 The relationship between actors and the state 42
 - 5.3 Promoting structural change 49
- 6 Discussion and conclusions 53
 - 6.1 Discussion 53
 - 6.1.1 The identity of Solidarity Economy in Finland 53
 - 6.1.2 The relationship between actors and the state 54
 - 6.1.3 Promoting structural change 56
 - 6.2 Conclusions 57
- References 60
- APPENDIX A. Semi-structured interviews questions 67

1 Introduction

The emergence and intensification of multidimensional challenges and the increase of the societal awareness of social and environmental issues have arisen the interest in novel ways to produce, consume and live. (Utting, van Dijk, and Mathei 2014) A prominent example that offers pathways to transform our economy is Solidarity Economy. More specifically, starting from the World Social Forum of 2001 in Brazil, which was the beginning of what today is perhaps the largest gathering of civil society searching for solutions for societal problems, Solidarity Economy has increasingly gained attention of different actors across the globe (Neamtan 2002). Since then, the concept of Solidarity Economy has encompassed a wide range of self-managed economic practices that rely on the principles of democracy, equality, cooperation and often environmental preservation.

Despite that Solidarity Economy has gained wider visibility in this century, some authors (Singer 2002, Laville 2010) consider that it is rooted in the 19th century on the cooperativism that emerged in the United Kingdom. In the following century, Solidarity Economy has remained in the form of collective alternatives of production and expanded in the form of associations and social economy (Gaiger 2007). Today, Solidarity Economy encompasses a wide range of economic practices that include time bank, community supported agriculture, workers cooperative, community currency and community garden. Such economic practices prioritize the human-wellbeing and the preservation of the planet over the maximization of profits and wealth accumulation (Dash 2016). In this way, they have been local alternative economic practices to the capitalist economy.

The growing interest of Solidarity Economy can be seen in different sectors of society. Global and regional networks formed by civil society have emerged in order to promote Solidarity Economy. RIPESS, for example, is an intercontinental network committed to the local and global development of Solidarity Economy. Governments in every part of the globe have promoted public policies that aim to develop Solidarity Economy (Utting 2015). In academia, there is an extensive literature on Solidarity Economy in the context of developing countries, while literature that focuses on developed countries is also found, but in smaller scale.

In fact, Solidarity Economy has become an important source in the search for alternative economic practices that can locally tackle multidimensional challenges including gender equality (Hillenkamp 2015), unemployment and precariat (Borzaga, Salvatori, and Bodini 2019), social exclusion and poverty (Gutberlet 2009) and environmental issues (Grasseni 2014). In addition, there have been evidences that during economic and social crises Solidarity Economy can be an important alterna-

tive (Castelao Caruana and Srnec 2013). Indeed, Miller (2009) argues that Solidarity Economy could have been an alternative to the 2008 crisis in the USA. In Greece, due to the recent economic crisis, there has been a sharp growth of Solidarity Economy enterprises that aim to provide basic needs (Kalogeraki, Papadaki, and Pera Ros 2018). In South America where social inequality is a tremendous issue, several enterprises have emerged in order to fight poverty and provide opportunities to individuals who have been excluded from the labor market (Quiroz-Nio and Murga-Menoyo 2017).

However, Solidarity Economy does not only work to minimize and remediate crises, in fact, one of its highest aims is to "challenge unjust and unsustainable capitalist practices by re-organizing the economy" (Eskelinen, Kovanen, and van der Wekken n.d.). Individuals unsatisfied with capitalism and its outcomes have also been important actors in the development of Solidarity Economy. They have promoted Solidarity Economy in contexts where there are not considerable economic and social crises. As Dash (2016, p. 65) states Solidarity Economy enterprises may either emerge based on "necessity" or "choice".

In the Nordic welfare context of Finland, enterprises that coin themselves as Solidarity Economy is found in different regions. For example, in Helsinki, a group of neighbors who were unsatisfied with the global political approach of tackling multidimensional challenges established a time bank (Trskman and Hyde-Clarke 2016). This time bank aims to strengthen a social and ecological just economy (Stadin Aikapankki 2018). In Tuusula there is a community supported-agriculture that advocates developing a new kind of solidarity-based food system (Oma Maa cooperative's farm 2018). In Turku, there is a co-op that promotes cultural and societal events in uncommercial ways.

It is a fact that Solidarity Economy practices emerge despite major economic and social crises as a form of radical change, however, such crises as well as the capacity of governments to provide social security and public services affect the development and expansion of Solidarity Economy (Utting 2015, p. 11). Consequently, Solidarity Economy may expand or decrease depending on the current economic, social and political context. This research aims to investigate how the scaling up of Solidarity Economy is enabled and constrained in the Nordic welfare context of Finland where there is low poverty, little social exclusion, a strong level of equality and a high level of employment and social protection. Such context has lacked more profound studies.

The motivations of this thesis stems from my previous involvement with Solidarity Economy in my home country Brazil when I first learned that another economy is possible. An economy that rather than be driven by economic growth, consumerism and profit, it focuses on the human well-being, community development and the

preservation of the planet. Solidarity Economy in Brazil is a vibrant movement that involves networks in several cities around the country, thousands of enterprises, local and state level government, universities and NGOs. Its collective ways of production and financing such as recycling cooperatives, community bank and agroecology have not only been important to spread an alternative to capitalism, but also to empower vulnerable individuals who have been excluded from the formal market economy.

I neither consider that Solidarity Economy is free of problems nor that its principles are fully achieved in practice, but in my view and according to many authors (Singer 2002, Dacheux and Goujon 2011, Dash 2016, Sahakian and Dunand 2015), Solidarity Economy can be an alternative to address the unsustainable development of our global economy. Therefore, I consider that Solidarity Economy could have even more visibility around the world, especially among developed countries. Despite the growing interest in Solidarity Economy, there is a lack of studies in the contexts where there are few social issues and a high level of welfare provision. To date, literature about Solidarity Economy in the context of the Nordic welfare state is very limited and focuses on isolated practices, instead of Solidarity Economy as a whole. This research fills this gap in existing knowledge and opens ground for future research by addressing the following question *How does the Nordic welfare state enable and constrain the development of Solidarity Economy?*

My purpose in this thesis is first of all to investigate Solidarity Economy in a context of reduced social vulnerability. Solidarity Economy has shown to be a valuable way to tackle social issues, but its transformative approach still raises skepticism (Utting 2015, p. 1). Therefore, I consider to be relevant to investigate Solidarity Economy in the Nordic welfare of Finland and alike contexts where there is low social vulnerability. Second, despite the fact that there are other welfare societies with reduced social issues, they may vary in terms of political system, economic agenda and public service provision. So that, by investigating the enabling and constraints aspect that Solidarity Economy face in the welfare of Finland, this research provides a deep insight of the development Solidarity Economy in the Nordic welfare context.

My research consists in qualitative data which I collect from interviews with nine Solidarity Economy actors in Finland. The actors have been involved with Solidarity Economy in different ways such as being a member in a Solidarity Economy enterprise and advocating the concept. I use thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) to compile the data into three themes that are relevant to the research aim and to explore a little investigated field. To enrich the analysis and answer the research question I use the structuration theory of Anthony Giddens (1984).

This research is divided in the following way. Based on existing literature, Chapter 2 starts with an overview of our global economic system. Then, it deeply explores

the concept of Solidarity Economy from its roots in the 19th century up to today. Finally, it states the relevance to study Solidarity Economy in the Nordic welfare context of Finland. Chapter 3, outlines structuration theory which is the framework I use to analyze the collected data. It also provides a notion on how and where the Nordic welfare and Solidarity Economy are situated in the promotion of systemic changes. Chapter 4 provides the process of data collection and the method used to analyze the data. Chapter 5 presents the data collected and analyzed. Chapter 6 presents a discussion of the previous chapter and concludes by providing a summary of this research, limitations and potential paths for future research.

2 Solidarity Economy: an alternative paradigm for global societies

Based on existing literature, in this chapter, I present the historical background of Solidarity Economy. I attempt to elucidate the concept, which despite a growing number of studies; it has not reached a clarified framework. In the final part, I state the importance of investigating Solidarity Economy in the context of the Nordic welfare.

2.1 The current dominant economic system and alternative economies

Commonly when we think about the notion of economy, we interchangeably relate it with capitalism. This happens because capitalism has been the dominant economic system operating throughout the global economy for such a long time that we are inclined to perceive it as something natural (Singer 2002, p. 7). It is true that capitalism is not totally even and has different models according to the nation's historical background and current institutional context (Judge, Fainshmidt, and Lee Brown III 2014, p. 363). However, regardless of its model, whether it is a liberal economy or coordinated market economy, capitalism is strongly founded on the principles of competition, profit making and wealth accumulation.

Capitalism as the global dominant economic system has played a significant role in the increase of the quality of life in many parts around the world and in the generation of unprecedented wealth. Indeed, the global life-expectancy has increased by 20 years in the last 5 decades (World Bank I 2017) and the GDP per capita has risen 23 times during the same period (World Bank II 2017). The new wealth has also increased the societal consumption and many people have lived in a way that was unimaginable decades ago. These are strong arguments that are often used to defend capitalism as the dominant economic system.

However, capitalism has not increased living standard across the globe in a fair manner. In fact, it has generated abnormal social inequality where 1 percent of the world population concentrates more wealth than the rest of the planet (Hardoon 2017). Social inequality happens both within and between countries. This issue is more explicit in the poor and developing countries where income inequality reaches the highest levels (WDI 2019), but it also affects the developed countries. The Nordic countries, for example, where this research focuses, have experienced a gradual increase in the income inequality in the past decade (OECD 2017).

Furthermore, the generation of new wealth has come at the cost of the degradation of the planet and has caused various ecological crises that threaten our livelihoods and the planet's biodiversity. Societal consumption patterns have overshoot what the planet can provide us (Rockstrm et al. 2009). Since the 1970s the earth is not able to regenerate itself and today would be necessary 1.7 earths to support global consumption patterns (Global Footprint Network 2019). At the same time, basic needs such as health, food, water and energy are not met by tens of millions around the world. The social foundation of the global society is still weak (Leach, Raworth, and Rockstrm 2013). In other words, "our global socio-economic system is highly unsustainable and needs to be transformed" (Hermwille 2016, p. 237)

The growing notion that the current dominant economic system is not sustainable for the people and the planet has been reflected in the increased attention to alternative economic practices. Many alternatives around the world have gained more visibility and even become mainstream (e.g. sharing economy) in the past recent years. However, the alternative economic practices perceive the dominant economic system differently. While some alternatives such as sharing economy, circular economy and social economy do not take strong stance against capitalism. They have even been profoundly incorporated by capitalism. Others such as De-growth and Solidarity Economy have a more critical view of the dominant economic system. They attempt to transform the economy rather than just be an answer to certain contradictions of capitalism.

2.2 The emergence, visibility and evolution of Solidarity Economy

In this section, I start the literature review about Solidarity Economy by introducing the concept, its increase of visibility and its historical background. I state the roots of Solidarity Economy and its evolution throughout the last two centuries.

The emergence and intensification of multiple global crises, as well as the raise of awareness of social and environmental problems have evoked the interest in alternative ways of production and consumption. (Utting, van Dijk, and Mathei 2014) Because of that the potential of Solidarity Economy has increasingly gained attention of civil society, scholars and even policy makers. The term has been used to coin self-managed enterprises that are led by the principles of democracy, cooperation, community, equality and often environmental preservation. The logic of Solidarity Economy enterprises contrasts with the logic of conventional capitalist enterprises. Solidarity Economy is not led by competition and does not aim the maximization of profits, rather it seeks for the transformation of the current economic system into something more democratic, cooperative, egalitarian, plural and sustainable.

(Miller 2009) One of its highest goals is to promote democratic and egalitarian ways to organize economic activities (Singer 2002).

The term Solidarity Economy is rooted in South America and France in the 1980s as a connector and empowering of alternative economic practices and institutions (Miller 2013, p. 528). In the following decades, the term gained broader visibility via World Social Forums discussions and different levels of network. However, its economic practices have not recently emerged; they have been present for a long period. Authors such as Singer (2002) and Laville (2010) consider that Solidarity Economy has foundations on the cooperativism that emerged in the 19th century during the intensification of the industrial capitalism in the United Kingdom. In the 20th century, collective alternatives remained and renewed in the form of associations and social economy (Gaiger 2007). In the 21st century, Solidarity Economy has become an umbrella term for alternative economic practices that prioritize the human wellbeing and the preservation of planet over the generation of profits and economic growth (Kawano 2013). Today, Solidarity Economy includes a wide range of practices such as time bank, alternative currency, community supported agriculture, workers cooperative, community currency, collective kitchen and community garden.

Solidarity Economy practices can be found in every part of the world in many forms. However, despite the fact that Solidarity Economy is a growing worldwide movement; the term is still not widely known and its practices remain modest in many places. In particular, the movement is stronger in South America, North America (Quebec, Canada) and some countries in the Western Europe. Because of the lack of visibility of Solidarity Economy in many contexts, many enterprises around the world that share similar principles of Solidarity Economy unconsciously do not identify themselves as part of the movement (Allard and Davidson 2008, p. 4). The self-recognition of such enterprises as Solidarity Economy is important to consolidate a broader network, where actors can cooperate among themselves and build what can be called "solidarity economy chains or supply chains" (Kawano 2009, p. 13). It is important to mention that many of the Solidarity Economy enterprises have limited resources, work informally and commonly struggle to survive. Hence, strengthening the Solidarity Economy network is crucial to "support the practices on the ground" (RIPESS 2015, p. 9) and make the alternatives more visible to the population at large and political actors.

Furthermore, Solidarity Economy does not reach wider visibility because is detracted and marginalized "in both mainstream and critical discourse" (Bergeron and Healy 2015, p. 73). Capitalist practices are deeply embedded in most parts of the world and certainly influence on how people perceive the economy. Society is highly restricted to a homogeneous perspective of economy and economic alternatives often

become least relevant. There is a collective consensus that capitalist practices are the exclusive way to produce, consume and trade goods and services. While alternative practices are either seen as too radical or not considered "the real economy". In this way, Solidarity Economy has shown to be important to shift the paradigm that the economy must mainly be led by competition, consumption and growth. In other words, as stated by Kawano (2009, p. 13), Solidarity Economy offers many alternative paths to produce, distribute, consume and live.

2.3 The concept of Solidarity Economy

In this section, I continue with the historical background by showing how Solidarity Economy took its first steps in different parts of the world. Then, I state the relevant aspects that have motivated the development of Solidarity Economy in this century. In the last part, I provide a deeper notion of Solidarity Economy and the way it differs from the dominant economic system.

Historically, Solidarity Economy took shape through workers and the most excluded seeking for better conditions of life through cooperativism and associationism. In Europe, Solidarity Economy has ties to the cooperativism that started in the 1800s in the United Kingdom (Singer 2002). Impoverished workers who were being replaced by machinery or facing precarious job conditions put the self-management into action in the form of cooperatives as an alternative to secure better life condition. In South America, Solidarity Economy has broader roots in many different alternative economic practices (e.g. community supported agriculture, waste pickers cooperatives and insolvent industries overcome by workers) that emerged in the final decades of the last century. Such alternative practices have formed a vibrant movement that empowers vulnerable people who have been marginalized in many ways. In North America (Quebec), Solidarity Economy is connected to the cooperativism and mutualism led by the workers' movement that emerged a hundred years ago (Neamtan 2002). These cooperatives helped to overcome unemployment, poverty and provide livelihood to the marginalized.

The roots of Solidarity Economy are highly related to workers struggle and marginalized individuals seeking for basic life conditions. These remarkable features have been fundamental foundations of Solidarity Economy. In response to unemployment and precarious working condition, Solidarity Economy has shown to be an alternative that worth the look. Borzaga, Salvatori, and Bodini (2019) even claim that Solidarity Economy has been a viable alternative to such challenges. More recently, the increase of austerity policies that restrict the provision of social security and public services has played a growing role on the emergence of Solidarity Economy. An emblematic example is the recent sharp increase of Solidarity Economy practices in Greece (Daskalaki, Fotaki, and Sotiropoulou 2018). As an

answer to the economic crises that has led to unemployment and the intensification of austerity policies, people have relied on diverse Solidarity Economy practices to meet their basic needs.

In addition, in this century, other factors have called the attention to the development of alternative economic practices and have driven the current expansion of Solidarity Economy. Following, I state six relevant factors brought by Utting (2015, p. 6-7) that have motivated the scaling up of Solidarity Economy. These factors are either bottom-up from individuals and grassroots movements or top-down from governments and international organizations:

1. A growing consensus that economic growth and industrialization models play a significant role on the emergence and intensification of financial, food, energy and environment crises
2. A discernment that wealth and social inequality is connected to "deregulation, state retrenchment, financialization and commodification" (p. 6). Meaning that a few have been benefited and concentrated most of the economic resources in their grasp
3. A discourse shift that urges to transform the economy into something more participative and democratic where ordinary people would play a significant role
4. Individuals and social movements have increasingly searched for different types of lifestyles and advocated for gender equality, environmental justice and human rights
5. The spread and growing awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals which was created by the United Nations
6. A increasing attention of international organizations and governments to programs and initiatives that promote social well-being

This diversity that drives the emergence and development of Solidarity Economy makes the movement to be uneven. In some contexts, Solidarity Economy can have a stronger ecological identity, while in other, social aspects are more determinant. However, despite these variations, there is a common understanding that the current dominant economic system plays a great role in causing such challenges. Solidarity Economy highly relies on the fact that the current economic system is "failing us environmentally, politically, socially and economically" (Garrett-Peltier and Scharber 2008, p. 26).

Thus, more recently, Solidarity Economy has shown to be an alternative that can balance environmental, social and economic needs. It has developed a strong critical sense of social justice and a growing awareness of environmental preservation. It is rooted in a high level of democratic values and in the idea of the commons. Decisions and results are shared by all the members in a fair way. Ordinary people become crucial actors to shape and control the economy in which they are involved. Communities and local initiatives that are often forgotten by the dominant economy, turn out to be at the forefront. The maximization of profits over social well-being and the preservation of the nature is set aside. In this way, various types of enterprises that carry the principles of Solidarity Economy have become alternatives that can reshape the economy in a decentralized and bottom-up manner.

Arruda (2005, p. 3) clearly differentiates the principles of Solidarity Economy and the dominant economy:

[Solidarity Economy] differs from the dominant system in terms of the basic way by which society organizes consumption production, technology, trade, finance, education and communication. The dominant system puts capital, profit and accumulation of material wealth at the center of human endeavor and the objective to be maximized. Solidarity Economy recognizes humankind, both the individual and social being, not only as creators and producers of economic wealth but also as co-owners of material wealth, co-users of natural resources, and co-responsible for the conservation of Nature. The dominant system leads to the concentration of wealth among the few and the disenfranchisement of the many. Solidarity Economy strives towards producing and sharing enough material wealth among all in order to generate sustainable conditions for self-managed development of each and every member of societies, the peoples and the planet.

2.4 A broader sense of Solidarity Economy

In this section, I provide a broader perspective of Solidarity Economy. I show in which economic process each Solidarity Economy practice is situated. Then, I argue that Solidarity Economy becomes more visible and viable when various actors and enterprises are connected with and support one another. In the last part, I bring the importance of the public sector in the development of Solidarity Economy.

In a solidarity-based economy the four essential process (production, distribution, consumption, and surplus) of an economic act are in line with the principles of Solidarity Economy (Aponte-Garcia 2009). Production is encouraged by solidarity, cooperation, equality among members and shared decision making. Consumption is

characterized by the "community element" over individual (Aponte-Garcia 2009, p. 45) where ethical, social and ecological factors are prioritized. Surplus is designated to promote the functionality of the solidarity-based economy and other social and ecological gains. Distribution seeks for reciprocity that enhance social interaction when services or products are moved from production to consumption.

The figure 2.1 adapted from Miller (2009, p. 32) demonstrates in what economic process Solidarity Economy practices and actors are placed. Miller, though, uses the terms transfer/exchange instead of distribution and adds a fifth process called creation. The terms transfer and exchange emphasize the reciprocity without the presupposition of having something in return. Creation recognizes that a proper starting point of Solidarity Economy is sustained in the high regard for the natural resources and their co-use. Meaning that the natural resources are responsibly and collectively used to benefit communities as a whole. In the same line, cultural experiences, which include ideas, skills and stories, are mutually shared. Both natural resources and cultural experiences enhance common trust that is fundamental to foster Solidarity Economy.

To have a clarified view of how Solidarity Economy practices relate to the other four economic process, I show existing enterprises that suit to each of the process: Collective Copies (production), Oma Maa (consumption), Hanbat LETS (exchange and transfer), Banco Palmas (surplus). However, it is important to take into consideration that Solidarity Economy has strong foundations on the community level where its emergence relates to local common interest. So that, even the same type of Solidarity Economy enterprise may take different paths and manifest differently according to several local variations including culture, social aspects, infrastructure and ideology. The key point, thus, is to identify such practices and bring them together in a way that strengthens Solidarity Economy as a whole.

- Production

- Collective Copies is a worker cooperative that offers the digital copying and finishing services in Western Massachusetts. The workers democratically share the decision-making process of a wide range of matters that varies from payments to work shift (Gibson-Graham, Cameron, and Healy 2013, p. 76). They, for example, have collectively decided that the salaries of each worker cannot significantly vary (Gibson-Graham, Cameron, and Healy 2013, p. 76). Every worker is equally benefitted when the job is well done and some surplus is still donated to some local organization (Collective Copies 2018). Collective Copies is a small worker-owned cooperative that offers its workers the power to steer their economic lives. Other examples of big scale worker cooperative are found

in many different places; Mondragon (Spain), Amul (India) and Desjardins (Canada).

- Consumption

- Oma Maa is a community supported agriculture situated near Helsinki (Finland) that enables consumers to buy local and organic food. Each of the 146 consumers (food members) own a production share, are actively encouraged to participate in various communal services and can be part in the decision-making process. (Oma Maa cooperative's farm 2018) This close relationship between Oma Maa and the food members strengthens the sense of community while the organic production sustains the health of the local ecosystem.

- Exchange and transfer

- Hanbat LETS is a local exchange trading system in Daejeon (South Korea) that was created in the beginning of the 2000s as an initiative to promote the agenda 21 of the United Nations. (Hirota 2009, p. 78) This initiative has around 500 members who use a community currency in local business and to exchange their skills and labors (Complementary Currency Resource Center 2017). Different products and services such as handcrafts, farming, medical services and organization of events can be exchanged through the community currency. (Hirota 2009, p. 78) Hanbat LETS, according to its member, have improved the community lifestyle by establishing a relationship of mutual help which has been lost due to the rapid modernization and industrialization of South Korea. (Complementary Currency Resource Center 2017).

- Surplus

- Banco Palmas is a community bank that was established by residents association to promote the local development in a poor community of 30 thousand inhabitants in the northeast of Brazil. By providing a series of solidary bank services that foment local production and consumption, Banco Palmas has improved the living conditions of its local community since the late 1990s (Banco Palmas 2018). Banco Palmas enables that the community wealth circulates locally in different forms such as micro-credit to Solidarity Economy enterprises, renovation of houses, educational projects and several other actions that improve the local living condition.

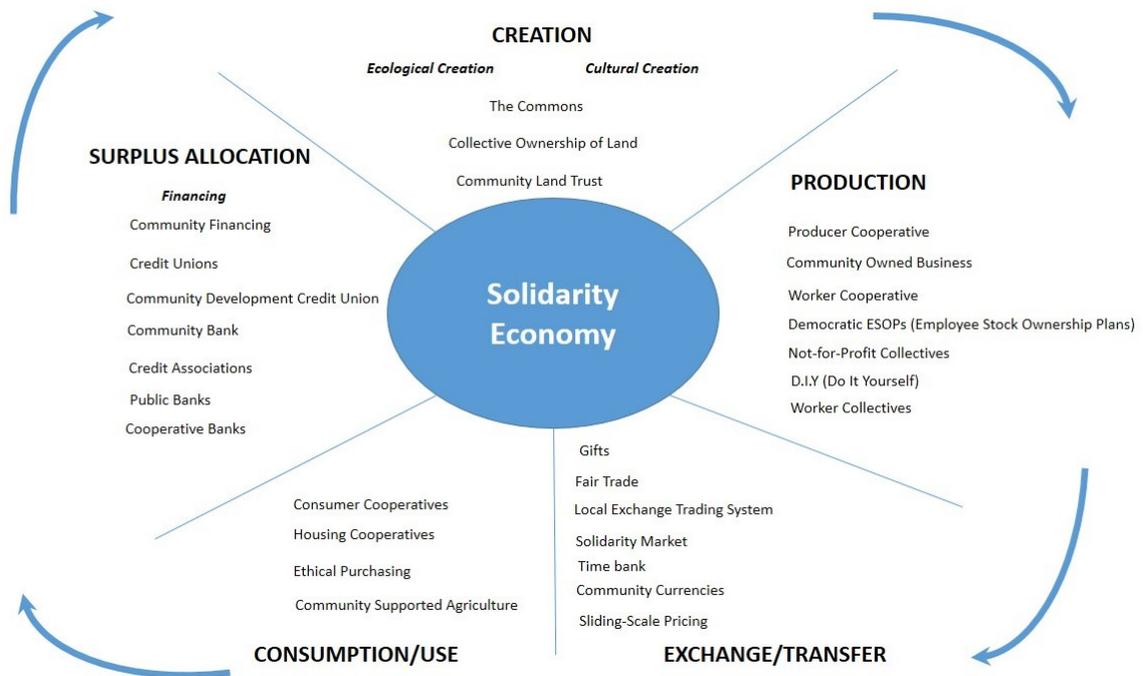


Figure 2.1 Adapted from Miller 2009, p. 32

The main point of the figure 2.1, in my view, is to demonstrate that a broad perspective of a solidarity-based economy is not possible when it is taken into consideration isolated practices. The Solidarity Economy framework only becomes visible and viable when different Solidarity Economy practices and actors are interconnected in a coherent manner. In this way, it is possible to envision an economic cycle beyond homogeneous practices where various existing solidarity-based economy practices contribute to and complement one another.

Furthermore, it is important to bring attention to the fact that communities themselves may not be able to self-sustain the full functionality of Solidarity Economy. The public sector also has an important role on the development of alternative economic practices. Even though it may be complicated to fully distinguish public policies towards Solidarity Economy, since the beginning of this century, it is well documented that an increasing number of governments (mostly in South America and Europe, but also in Asia and Africa) have embraced public policies to foment Solidarity Economy (Utting 2015, p. 17). Where progressive left governments have played a significant role in the creation of public policies (Castelao Caruana and Srnc 2013). Such policies include public financing, availability of public space, university incubators, subsidies and training.

Taking into account all the challenges that Solidity Economy may face due to bureaucracy, financing, forming broad and consistent networks, lack of visibility, marginalization and informality, the government becomes a fundamental enabling

actor. Mendell and Alain (2015) urge that an expansion of Solidarity Economy requires the implementation of public policies in partnership with Solidarity Economy actors. This partnership means that both policy makers and Solidarity Economy actors need to understand the capacities of each other and be in constant dialogue. In this way, the risk to implement top-down policies that fail to consider local diversity is minimized while the limitations of the public sector are respected. Examples of well-established public policies can be found in the global north and south. As the partnership between the Brazilian government and Banco Palmas that resulted in the creation of several other community banks around the country that benefited 1 million people (Banco Palmas 2018, p. 4). Or, the financial support that a local council in Quebec provided to Solidarity Economy enterprises (Mendell and Alain 2015, p. 171).

2.5 The importance of a pure framework

After an extensive literature review about the concept and historical background of Solidarity Economy. In this section, I bring attention to the fact that despite Solidarity Economy has gained visibility and more literature has been written in the past recent years, the concept is still not clarified. I argue that this lack of clarification may negatively affect Solidarity Economy, but I also argue that having a certain flexibility in the conceptualization can help the development of Solidarity Economy.

The concept of Solidarity Economy is still debatable and may vary according to the local ideology and geography (McMurtry 2015, p. 57). Many authors (Dacheux and Goujon 2011; Miller 2009; Coraggio 2015) even claim that there is not a clarified framework. This, to a great extent, happens because Solidarity Economy has been developed by heterogeneous groups of individuals from various parts of the world under different circumstances. For example, waste pickers' cooperatives in Brazil emerge due to the difficulties of homeless people to find opportunities in the formal economy, while a time bank in Finland emerges as an activist approach to challenge the dominant economic practices.

Solidarity Economy is not an established economic model proposed by a few individuals (Kawano and Miller 2008), instead, it is built by many people and communities seeking for economic alternatives that meet their needs. Consequently, Solidarity Economy may have different names and forms according to its location. For example, RIPESS (2015, p. 13) has mapped how Solidarity Economy terminology varies accordingly. In Africa, in the French speaking countries, it is adopted the term Social and Solidarity Economy. In Asia, there is not still a defined term and Social Enterprises are used as an initial point. In Europe, there has been a recent rise of the term Solidarity Economy, but Social Economy and cooperativism are still

strongly rooted. In South America, Solidarity Economy is well consolidated as a term. In North America, the US has not had a defined term and recently adopted Solidarity Economy. While in Canada (Quebec) Social Economy is a well-established term.

This lack of consensus of the framework may cause potential challenges that undermine a consistent scaling up of Solidarity Economy. To better illustrate how the open definition of the term constrains the development of Solidarity Economy, I collected four relevant issues:

1. The lack of clarification of the term can reduce Solidarity Economy to a tool that only works to alleviate social issues, rather than be addressed as an alternative economy. Coraggio (2015, p. 133), for example, points out that in Argentina the state approach towards Solidarity Economy does not aim to promote a "new economic perspective", rather it reaffirms capitalist practices to gain social benefits.
2. McMurtry (2015) alerts that the misconception of Solidarity Economy may lead to opportunistic and inappropriate use of the term and constrain its scaling up. He gives the example of the "Big Society" in the UK that was expressed in the language of Solidarity Economy. The former Prime Minister, Cameron, made clear in one of his speeches that the core of the Big Society included the empowerment of communities and redistribution of power. (Kisbe 2010, p. 484) The Big Society, however, is a policy where the government transfers some of its responsibilities to the citizens. The opportunistic use, or the exploitation, of prominent concepts also happens via for-profit interests. Sustainability and sharing economy, for example, have been widely exploited by private corporations in order to the maximization of their profits through a better reputation. The use of these terms as a merely marketing tool without truth foundation has been referred as greenwashing and sharewashing (Hawlitschek et al. 2018). This causes a potential harm to the whole sector and concept of sustainability and sharing economy. In other words, such prominent concepts are at severe risk to lose their real purpose.
3. The concept of Solidarity Economy includes a vast variety of economic practices including cooperatives, of which just Finland has over 4000 (PRH 2018). However, cooperatives do not necessarily carry the principles of Solidarity Economy, or even the basic principles of cooperatives. As Laville (2015, p. 48) points out that "enterprises are frequently cooperative in name only".
4. Solidarity Economy is also known as Social Economy depending on the location and they are often used interchangeably. However, despite the fact that these

concepts share some principles and have similar roots, they have been developed towards different perspectives of the economy. Social Economy neither advocates transforming the current economic system nor rejects it. Instead, Social Economy "accepts" the dominant economic system and tries to use it to reach social goals. Social Economy also often attempts to tackle social issues through market-based solutions (Miller 2009, p. 26) and contributes to public welfare to meet social of some categories of the population (Laville 2015, p. 48).

It is clear that a proper understanding of Solidarity Economy is important for its future development in a coherent manner. However, on the other hand, I believe that an excessive problematization of its concept may also cause potential harms. The principles of Solidarity Economy are considerably broad and their measurement can be controversial. Thus, it can be complicated to identify what really is a Solidarity Economy enterprise depending on the degree of exigency. Should a cooperative that causes some kind of environmental damage, but respects the other principles of Solidarity Economy be coined as Solidarity Economy? In what degree should the principles of Solidarity Economy be taken into consideration? How to measure the subjective principles of Solidarity Economy?

These are relevant questions that need to be taken into consideration because the principles of Solidarity Economy are not easily met by most (or all) of the enterprises. Different factors such as competition, difficulties of financing and adaptation to legislation move away enterprises from the principles of Solidarity Economy. Being too rigid may result in the exclusion of potential Solidarity Economy enterprises and undermine the construction of a broader network. The "real world" presents several complex challenges that need to be taken into account, otherwise an expansion of Solidarity Economy will always be limited. Focusing on a "weak theory" that rejects to know too much what is and is not possible can actually strengthen on-the-ground actions (Miller 2013, p. 526).

In the following section, I turn to Degrowth, which is a concept that wills to end economic growth. Degrowth has gained increasingly visibility in Europe and deserves especial attention when alternatives to the dominant economic system is under debate. Therefore, I introduce the concept and draw a relation with Solidarity Economy and how both concepts can contribute to each other.

2.6 Solidarity Economy and Degrowth

The transformative approach of Solidarity Economy is also seen as an important ally of other movements that challenge the economic growth and the dominant economic system. This happens because Solidarity Economy is not a utopic framework. It

offers existing practices that do not focus on the accumulation of profits; instead, they prioritize human well-being and have a growing sense of ecological preservation. In this section, I show how Solidarity Economy relates with and contributes to Degrowth, which is a growing concept originated in Western Europe and aims to give up growth as the main goal of the economy.

Demonstrating this association with a concept that shares key visions and is originated in Western Europe is particularly important because of two relevant factors. First, there is still a doubt on how Solidarity Economy should interact with similar concepts but different names (Miller 2009, p. 40). Second, since this research focuses on the context of a Nordic welfare state, it is relevant to identify possible synergy between Solidarity Economy and a concept that mostly target developed countries (in Finland, for example, there is an emerging Degrowth movement called *Kohtuusliikeis*).

Degrowth was established by activists in the beginning of the 21st century as a radical change that challenges the dominance of economic growth and seeks for alternatives to shrink consumption as a way to tackle ecological issues. Gradually, though, it has progressed and included concerns on democracy, social justice, well-being and even meaning of life. (Asara et al. 2015, p. 377) According to Degrowth, the current social, ecological and economic crises are consequences of "the obsession to promote growth at all costs" (Asara et al. 2015, p. 377). Because of that, Degrowth aims to move away from the idea that the only path to reach social prosperity is through economic growth. The central point of the concept is that through the reduction of consumption and production, especially in developed countries, it is possible to improve human well-being while the nature is safeguarded.

In the concept, not only large and medium scale actions including urban planning, senseless infrastructure and petrol dependence are taken into consideration. Small scale and local practices such as cycling, agroecology, vegetarianism and reuse are also crucial mechanisms to preserve the environment, reduce consumption and change the economic growth paradigm. Furthermore, Degrowth claims that it is necessary to rethink the dominant economic values (Martnez-Alier et al. 2010, p. 1743) and seek for alternatives that differ from the mainstream where social relations play the main role (Demaria et al. 2013). Taking into consideration all these aspects, Solidarity Economy becomes a relevant source to the framework of Degrowth.

Many authors have recognized that and referred to Solidarity Economy as an existing alternative to the execution of Degrowth's aspirations. Asara et al. (2015, p.378) argue that solidarity economy practices support people to reach basic needs in a process of "commoning with low material throughput". Demaria et al. (2013) state that Degrowth is still far from manage effective actions, of which Solidarity Economy can contribute and strengthen the movement with realistic alternatives.

In accordance with the mentioned authors, I believe that Solidarity Economy has a significant role on the Degrowth's framework because it has made the notions of "social utility and collective interest" of the economy more visible (Laville 2010, p. 36). At the same time, it enhances conscious consumption through a wide range of practices. In addition, this cooperation can increase the awareness and visibility of both concepts (Embshoff, Mller-Plantenberg, and Giorgi 2017, p. 7). Finally, Solidarity Economy has shown to be an alternative that can responsibly use natural resources and provides communities well-being without the obsessive desire for profit maximization.

2.7 The relevance to study Solidarity Economy in a Nordic country

This is the final section of the chapter 2. In this section, I focus on the Nordic welfare context of Finland which is the goal of this research. I point out the lack of studies and the importance to investigate Solidarity Economy in such context. I also present two hypothesis on how the Nordic welfare context can enable and constrain the development of Solidarity Economy.

Despite the growing interest of different actors in alternative economics, Solidarity Economy is still barely known and studied in many places. In fact, Solidarity Economy is not widely investigated in several developed countries. The majority of the existing studies either investigates each alternative economic practice independently from one another (Borowiak et al. 2018, p. 581) or focuses on developing countries. Especially in South America where, in general, Solidarity Economy emerges to tackle a variety of social and economic issues. The growing interest in Solidarity Economy has not materialized in a substantial increase of studies in developed countries, especially in the context of the Nordic welfare state where Solidarity Economy has not been deeply researched. Thus, to date, there has not been studies on the enabling and constraint factors that affect the development of Solidarity Economy in the Nordic welfare state.

I consider that studying the potential of Solidarity Economy in developed countries where there is little social issues and a high level of social security is important because in this context individuals do not only build Solidarity Economy as a necessity, but also as a choice. In other words, Solidarity Economy is not mainly led by individuals who build alternative economic practices to meet their basic needs. Rather, Solidarity Economy is also based on individuals who want to transform the current economy into something that is more ethically responsible to others and the planet. Both necessity and choice rely on "social cohesion" as a fundamental component of collective initiatives and provide foundations for a solidarity-based economy

(Dash 2016, p. 65), however, the second has a more transformative approach of reorganizing the economy.

In many scenarios Solidarity Economy works mainly to tackle social issues, alleviate the incapability of states to provide their citizens basic needs and as a response to economic crisis. There is a risk that Solidarity Economy becomes a complementary instead of transformative economy (Singer 2002, p. 114). Some authors have even raised the doubt whether Solidarity Economy is really able to transform the current economy (Utting, van Dijk, and Mathei 2014, p. 2). Therefore, investigating Solidarity Economy in the context of a Nordic welfare state where the government has been able to provide a high level of livelihood to its citizens is essential to further understand the potential of Solidarity Economy as a real alternative economy.

The Nordic welfare states have been successful in providing a high level of social security to its citizens. The success is expressed in several ways. Finland, where this study focuses, has outstanding achievements in multiple areas including social justice, human-wellbeing, protection of human rights and eradication of poverty. (Statistics Finland 2018) This scenario can be prosperous for Solidarity Economy because, usually, its development takes place in challenging environments with low level of social security and notably social and/or economic issues. In such environments, Solidarity Economy has often worked to alleviate social issues. It is true that recurrent economic crises have reached Finland since the beginning of the 1990s (Jokinen 2017), however, the level of social security and quality of life has been kept high. In the Nordic countries, individuals may have a fertile environment to seek for and develop alternative economic practices while the welfare state provides the high level of social security. In this scenario, individuals do not need to overwork to access basic social services and goods. Knowing that a high quality of public service provision is available may give ground to individuals to transform the local economy according to their desires and values.

On the other hand, the same scenario where individuals are happy, highly satisfied with their lives and have a high amount of trust on authorities (Statistics Finland 2018) can also constrain the development of Solidarity Economy. There have been evidences that when states are able to provide effective social policies the recourse to Solidarity Economy practices tend to decrease (Utting 2015, p. 11) As already stated, Solidarity Economy is highly related with the workers struggle and vulnerable people seeking for better life conditions in adverse situations. The resilience of individuals as well as their needs have been a crucial aspect for the emergence and continuity of Solidarity Economy. Because of that, the Nordic welfare can negatively affect the development of Solidarity Economy as individuals may not feel stimulated to seek for alternative economics since their basic needs are safely provided by the welfare state. In other words, they may not perceive that major

structural changes are necessary.

In addition, another factor that needs special attention and increases the importance of this study is the structural changes that the Nordic welfare model has been through in the past decades. There has been an increase use of market solutions in the provision of public services and intensification of austerity policies. The first is the so called marketization and means that public services are decentralized to for-profit companies in the form of outsourcing, privatization and subsidies. Marketization has raised legitimate doubts weather private companies will be able to maintain the outstanding level of social rights in the Nordic countries (Anttonen and Karsio 2017). The second means that to reduce government expenditures several cutbacks are made including in social areas. Lindberg, Nygrd, and Nyqvist (2018) state that the cut of social benefits in Finland already negatively affects the well-being of low-income household who lack basic needs.

This scenario of reduction of social security forces individuals to search for alternatives other than public provision to meet their basic needs (Lindberg, Nygrd, and Nyqvist 2018). Because of that, I believe that Solidarity Economy may gain more relevance in the Nordic countries in the future, especially in case of a more intense dismantling of the public service provision and cutbacks of social benefits. As already stated, the practices of Solidarity Economy have been expanded in scenarios where the government is not able to provide effective social policies.

In Finland or any other Nordic country there has not been major studies on Solidarity Economy and related literature has been nearly nonexistent. Different reasons may explain this lack of literature, but I consider that they are connected to the fact that the concept of Solidarity Economy is not well spread and the current studies treat different economic practices "in isolation from one another" (Borowiak et al. 2018, p. 581). For example, three studies on the most recognized time bank of Finland do not use the term Solidarity Economy. Instead, they adopt the terms sharing economy (Trskman and Hyde-Clarke 2016), collaborative consumption (Laamanen, Wahlen, and Campana 2015) and alternative economies (Eskelinen 2018). Furthermore, a few enterprises coin themselves as Solidarity Economy (see more at: <http://fi.solidarityeconomy.eu/en/lisaetietoa/susy-map/>) and, as in several European countries, Social Economy is better spread and studied concept.

Because of this lack of studies, the capabilities of Solidarity Economy in the context of the Nordic welfare state has not been investigated. In this way, this study is the pioneer in investigating a broad view of Solidarity Economy in a Nordic country.

3 Theoretical framework: structuration theory

In this chapter, I focus on the structuration theory which is the framework I use to analyze the data. First, I state the reason why I adopt structuration theory to answer the research question. Second, I provide a broad overview of the theory including its main elements. In the last section, I put Solidarity Economy and the Nordic welfare in lens of structuration theory and point out how they can be means of change.

3.1 Why structuration theory

The location of actors and of collectivities in different sectors or regions of more encompassing social systems strongly influences the impact of their habitual conduct upon the integration of societal totalities. (Giddens 1984, p. 24)

Structuration theory corresponds well to the need of this research to investigate how the Nordic welfare state enables and constrains the development of Solidarity Economy in Finland. In addition, it helps to investigate the influence of the current economic system over the development of Solidarity Economy. In especial, because structuration theory is a sociological concept that offers perspectives of human behavior based on both structure and agency. Structuration theory does not only imply that structure is a constraint of individuals' freedom to act, but it also puts structure as an enabler. This means that structure regulates and reproduces social life. Structuration theory recognizes the interaction of societal norms, rules, meaning through language and discourse and power. In other words, structuration theory takes the stance that social action cannot be entirely explained by the structure and agency approaches only.

3.2 Structuration Theory

In the 1970's, Giddens started to develop his approach on the reconceptualization of the conventional views of structures and human agency, but it was in the mid 1980's through the book *The Constitution of Society* that he established a more elaborated framework of the structuration theory. His work aimed to unify structure and agency in a framework that paid attention to both elements (Stones 2005, p. 4). Giddens transcended the "dualism between voluntarism and determinism" (Archer 2010, p. 227). Meaning that instead of either focusing on a human agency centric approach, which undervalues the structural context (e.g. rational choice), or structure centric

approach, which neglects human agency (e.g. Marxism). Giddens worked to bridge the gap between structure and agency by experiencing "social practices ordered across space and time" (Giddens 1984, p. 2).

The human centric approaches put agency as the most important factor in the explanation of human behavior and gave little attention to the constraining factors of structure. While the structural centric approaches put structure as the dominant and most of attention was given to the constraining factors of structure. One of the main ambitions of Giddens was to put an end on that dichotomy between structure and human agency. His work put neither primacy on individual actors nor any type of societal totality.

We should see social life, not just as society out there or just the product of the individual here, but as a series of ongoing activities and practices that people carry on, which at the same time reproduce larger institutions. (Jones and Karsten 2008, p. 131)

Giddens' work moves away from the idea that structure and agents are disconnected. This remarkable feature of the structuration theory recognizes that both structure and agents "are mutually constitutive" (Stones 2005, p. 21) and presuppose each other (Archer 2010, p. 226). Neither structure nor agents are put as the most important, both are essential for one another. This interdependence is the core of the structuration theory and is known as the *duality of structure* where structure is both the means of human agency and the outcomes of practices that agents produce. Structure does not only establish limitations, it also provides crucial means for social construction (Mouzelis 1989, p. 615). Giddens (1979, p.15) defines the duality of structure as:

By the duality of structure I mean the essential recursiveness of social life, as constituted in social practices: structure is both the medium and outcome of the reproduction of practices. Structure enters simultaneously into the constitution of the agent and social practices and 'exists' in the generating moments of this constitution.

Giddens claims that agency is shaped by structure, while, over the time; agency rebuilds structure. Structure is both reproduced and produced through the interaction with human agency. Giddens refers to agency not as the intention of people doing certain things. Rather, he (Giddens 1984) refers to agency as the capability of people in doing those things "in the first place" (p. 9) where agency relies on this capability of people to "make a difference" to preexisting or a succession of events (p. 14). Agency, thus, also concerns the capability of people to follow one system of practice and reject another (Rizzi, Pellegrini, and Battaglia 2018, p. 807), as well

as the capability of people to coordinate their own actions with others and against others (Buhr 2002, p. 19). In this way, it can be assumed that to be an agent is to be able to make the use of "a range of casual powers" in the flow of everyday life where an agent stops being such if she/he "loses the capability to make the difference" (Giddens 1984, p. 14).

Structuration theory assumes that agents have a high amount of autonomy and, as previously mentioned, through their agency, may reshape structure. However, their actions also rely on their structural position they occupy. The location, time and characteristics of the surrounding social systems strongly affect and influence human conduct. Agents frequently absorb temporal and spacial characteristics in their agency. They neither possess total autonomy nor do they create a completely new situation (Shilling 1992, p. 80). So that, structuration theory is founded on the fact that human actors are both enabled and constrained by their structural position they are situated at a given time (Aalto et al. 2014, p. 4).

The extent and intensity of agency exercised by human actors, thus, deeply rely on the surrounding structures, as well as on actors' interpretation and utilization of these structures. The two latest relate to what Giddens refers as *knowledgeability*, which is the "knowledgeable capacities of agents to structural features" and imply in the production and reproduction of everyday social encounters (Giddens 1984, p. 28). Knowledgeability is everything that agents know about the circumstances of their and others' actions, and includes discursive and tacit knowledge (Giddens 1984, p. 375). Giddens puts a great deal of emphasis in the notion that is the knowledge of structures that makes agents capable to act (Sewell 1992)

It is assumed that every member of society has a great amount of knowledge about society and its surrounding structures. This knowledge is seen in the discursive and practical consciousness that people perform in their everyday lives (Giddens 1984, p. 7). Discursive consciousness, which is the emphasis of this study, is what human agents are able to say about social conditions and their own actions (Jones and Karsten 2008, p. 133). In other words, it is the ability to verbally demonstrate knowledge. Practical consciousness is what human agents know about social conditions, but are not able to put it into words (Jones and Karsten 2008, p. 133). Agents are often unable to provide discursive reasons for how they act, however, this does not mean that their actions are not founded on implicit knowledge of their surrounding structures and circumstances (Shilling 1992, p. 82).

Despite the differences between discursive and practical consciousness there is no barrier between them, on the contrary, as Giddens (1984, p. 7) claims, "there are only differences between what can be said and what is characteristically simply done". The same agent, for example, can express discursive and practical consciousness according to different aspects such as socialization, routinization of daily

activities and learning experience. Both concepts highlight two features of the knowledgability of agents which enter in their capability to make the difference (Shilling 1992, p. 83). However, it is important to remind that in the structuration theory agents also are constrained by and reproduce their surrounding structures.

In the concept of structuration theory, structure is never a product, but a process that develops over time and space (Archer 2010, p.227; Buhr 2002, p.18). Structure is not something that is external to agents, rather it is dependent of agents' memory traces and knowledge. Giddens (1984, p. 377) defines structure as:

Rules and resources, recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems. Structure exists only as memory traces, the organic basis of human knowledgability, and as instantiated in action.

Giddens (1984, p. 18) relates rules to the composition of "meaning" and the "sanctioning" of social conduct. Rules are cognitive, interpretative frames and cultural norms that are continuously in the course of everyday activities. (Hermwille 2016 p. 239) They are embedded in the mind of human actors in the form of memory traces. Human actors, thus, are aware of rules and put them forward in the production and reproduction of daily social encounters. The awareness of rules is the core of the knowledgability, which according to the structuration theory characterizes human agents.

Structuration theory (Giddens 1984, p. 22) considers eight relevant characteristics of rules. (1) "Intensive" rules, which are constantly brought forth in the everyday activities. (2) "Shallow" rules, which have just a casual impact in the social life. (3) "Tacit" rules, which are tacitly comprehended. (4) "Discursive", which is the interpretation of rules. (5) "Formalized" rules, which are formally codified such as laws. (6) "Informal" rules, which are informally codified, but may generate sanctions in the daily practices. (7) "Strongly sanctioned" rules, which are more likely to be sanctioned. (8) "Weakly sanctioned" rules, which are less likely to be sanctioned.

Resources are the media by which power is exercised and are separated into allocative and authoritative. Allocative resources are the capabilities that generate command over objects, good and material phenomena, while authoritative resources are the transformative capabilities that generate command over persons. (Giddens 1984, p. 33) Resources are also divided into human (authoritative) and non-human (allocative) resources (Sewell 1992, p. 9). Human resources include physical power, knowledge, emotional involvement and skills in performing tasks, while non-human resources include objects and natural resources. All these elements can be used to gain, intensify or maintain power.

Giddens (1984, p. 29) proposes three dimensions of structures. Rules is referred as structures of legitimation and signification, while resource as structure of domination. Following, I provide an overview of each structure based on Burh's article (Buhr 2002, p. 19):

- Structure of legitimation is the societal norms and rules that provide morality. It is a set of common "values and ideals, normative rules, mutual rights and moral obligations".
- Structure of signification is the meaning through language and discourse. It provides direction to the purpose and aim of actions. It includes "webs of semantic codes, interpretive schemes and discursive practices".
- Structure of domination is how power and influence are applied regarding the utilization of allocative and authoritative resources. It is concerned with both types of resources that "provide for the coordination and control of people and things". In other words, it is the means to get things done.

All the three structures will certainly be to some degree in any social action (Stones 2005, p. 17) and interact with one another. For example, structures of legitimation are often built on signification (Hermwille 2016, p. 239): Solidarity Economy actors have to provide meaningful explanations for their acts, otherwise, the legitimation of the movement may disappear. The interaction among the three structures represents what Giddens has defined as the duality of structure and it is the core of the structuration theory (figure 3.1). As Giddens (1984) often points out, rules and structures cannot be kept apart from each other and are constantly recurring in the production and reproduction of social systems.

By social systems, Giddens means "empirically observable, intertwining, and relatively bounded social practices that link persons across time and space" (Sewell 1992, p. 5-6). Social systems encompass not what several social scientists mean by society, but different sizes of social units such as capitalist world system and local communities (Sewell 1992, p. 6). Social systems, thus, are not structures, they rather incorporate structures (Mouzelis 1989, p. 614). It is in the linkage between social systems and structures that the idea of structuration is found. As Mouzelis (1989, p. 614) in reference to Giddens states:

To study the structuration of a social system is to study the ways in which that system, via the application of generative rules and resources, and in the context of the unintended outcomes, is produced and reproduced in interaction...[So structuration refers to] the conditions governing the continuity or transformation of structures and therefore the reproduction of systems.

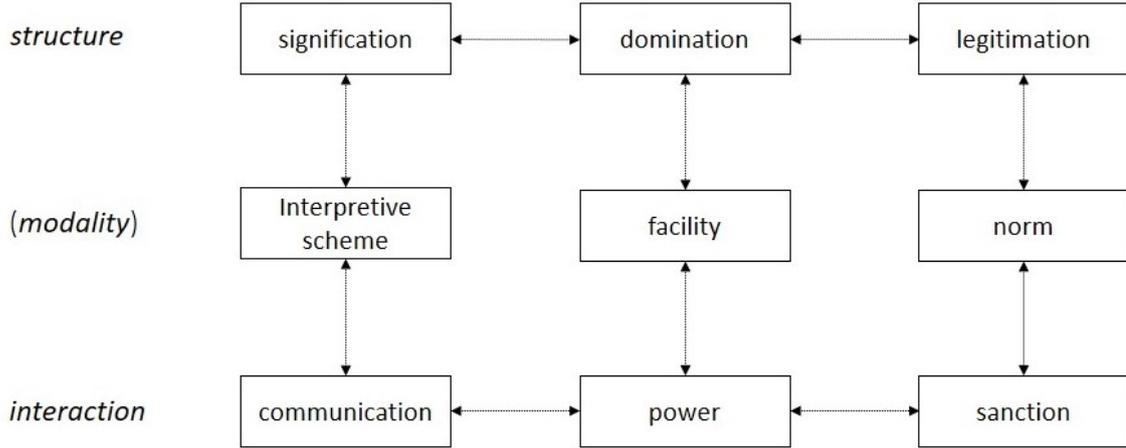


Figure 3.1 Adapted from Giddens 1984, p. 29

3.3 Structuration Theory and change

Solidarity Economy is a movement formed by many individuals who locally develop a wide range of economic practices. Despite some variations in terms of motivations and understanding of the concept of Solidarity Economy, these individuals, to a certain extent, aim to promote changes in the dominant economic system by developing local level and bottom-up initiatives. The promotion of changes, thus, is founded on the capabilities of these individuals to transform their and others' everyday lives. However, according to structuration theory, individuals solely are not able to promote such changes, they are also influenced by their structural position they are located at a given time, which can constrain and enable their capabilities to develop Solidarity Economy.

In the lens of structuration theory, individuals engaged with Solidarity Economy are agents who "possess a level of freedom within the structure[s]" (Steinerowski and Steinerowska-Streb 2012, p. 171). They exercise their agency to promote changes in their surrounding structures and further transform a social system, which is the dominant economic system. The agents use their knowledgeability of the structures and their capabilities to make a difference in their daily social encounters to put forward the development of Solidarity Economy. Thus, Solidarity Economy is a form of agency in which knowledgeable agents work towards their aims and is both constrained and enabled by the structures.

In this study, the agents are located in the context of the Nordic welfare of Finland. According to Giddens, the welfare system can be a social system that incorporates structures rather than be a structure itself, just as the current dominant economic system. In this way, the agents are surrounded by the structures of the Nordic welfare system. By structures, I consider the rules (legitimation and signification) and resources (domination) proposed by Giddens. As previously mentioned,

structures have wide range of forms including societal norms, morality, meaning through language and means of power.

It is important to note, however, that the Nordic welfare state is deeply interconnected with the dominant economic system where the rules and resources of one social system can often presuppose the other. For example, the composition of meaning of Solidarity Economy in Finland, which Giddens refers as a rule, can be considered a structure of both social systems. So that, despite the fact that the primary aim of this research is to investigate how the Nordic welfare state constrains and enables the development of Solidarity Economy, it also has to take into consideration the structures of the current economic system which may be interconnected with the structures of the Nordic welfare.

Furthermore, there are two other aspects that are relevant to emphasize. First, structures are not static, rather they are processes that evolve over time and space. Second, structures do not only establish limitations to human conduct, they also provide fundamental means to social construction. Therefore, the Nordic welfare provides fundamental means to agents exercise their agency via Solidarity Economy and further modify their surrounding structures. In other words, the Nordic welfare is also a mean to promote changes in the dominant economic system.

4 Data and method

This chapter is divided in two sections. First, I provide the data collection process that I use to find the relevant answers to the research aim. Then, I introduce the thematic analysis which is the method I use to compile and analyze the collected data and answer the research question. Thematic analysis is also important to provide a broad perspective of a phenomenon that has been little investigated, which is the case of Solidarity Economy in the Nordic welfare of Finland.

4.1 Data Collection

This research is based on data from qualitative interviews with 9 actors of Solidarity Economy from different regions of Finland (Tampere, Turku and Helsinki). The criteria to select the actors can be divided into two groups. First, key individuals of enterprises that coin themselves as Solidarity Economy. Enterprises that consider to be part of the Solidarity Economy movement were catalogued by a European network of Solidarity Economy called SUSY (<http://fi.solidarityeconomy.eu/lisaetietoa/susy-map/>) and the commons.fi (<https://commons.fi/verkosto-participants/>). Second, individuals who do not directly work with Solidarity Economy enterprises, but have advocated its development. The advocacy has been made through different sources such as social forums, lectures, events, social meetings, publications and workshops. Out of the 9 actors, 7 directly work in a Solidarity Economy enterprise and 2 advocate the development of Solidarity Economy. However, it is important to mention that the actors from the first group often get involved in the advocacy and actors from the second group often get engaged with Solidarity Economy enterprises.

This research adopts face-to-face interview, either individually or simultaneously with 2 members from the same enterprise. All interviews are digitally recorded with the consent of the interviewees. In total, I conduct 7 interviews with 9 actors, corresponding to roughly 5 hours of recorded interviews which are further transcribed. As far as possible, I visit the enterprises to conduct the interviews. In my understanding of Solidarity Economy, it is important to go beyond the interviews and be in interaction with the Solidarity Economy enterprises.

Furthermore, this research adopts semi-structured approach and open-ended questions. This combination enables the researcher to adapt her/his interview according to each interviewees' answers and gain relevant details (Roulston 2010, p. 8-10). The researcher can see and understand the topic from different angles. This is particularly important for this study because the actors of Solidarity Economy are widely diverse in terms of background and activities they have been involved. As of-

ten stressed in this research, Solidarity Economy is very plural in terms of economic practices and practitioners. Therefore, an approach that takes this plurality into consideration and enables the researcher to have a perspective from many different views is fundamental to the collection of insightful data.

The interviews, thus, vary in terms of duration and order of the questions where in some cases the questions can be even different. Roughly, the interviews proceed from a view of the actors' involvement in Solidarity Economy and a brief description of the enterprise where they work (for actors who directly work in a Solidarity Economy enterprise). Further, the interviews go to more detailed themes that aimed to obtain interviewees' perception of Solidarity Economy, its role, its development in the Nordic welfare context of Finland, its future expectation and the necessary actions to its expansion.

Despite the limited number of interviews, I consider that the collected data enables an insightful perception and overview of Solidarity Economy in Finland because of two relevant factors. First, Solidarity Economy is not a widely spread concept in Finland where a few actors have been deeply involved. In fact, I interview the main actors in Finland. Second, the focus of this research is to understand Solidarity Economy from the perspective of the actors, thus, it was not necessary to expand the interviews to individuals that are outside of the Solidarity Economy movement.

4.2 Method of analysis

This research adopts Thematic Analysis which is a method to identify, analyze and interpret "patterns of meaning (themes) within qualitative data" (Clarke and Braun 2017, p. 297). Thematic Analysis is a widely used methodology in many fields of research from psychology to social sciences (Fugard and Potts 2015, p. 669) that searches for "themes that emerge as being important to the description of the phenomenon" (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006, p. 82). Themes are responsible to bring together part or elements of ideas or experiences, which separated might be meaningless. In other words, themes provide a comprehensive picture of collective experience (Aronson 1995, p. 2).

Thematic Analysis describes and organizes the set of complex data into a rich and detailed manner (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 78). This is possible because of the flexibility of Thematic Analysis which is not theory dependent, rather it can be applied "across" a wide range of theoretical approaches and be adapted according to the need of the research (Braun and Clarke 2006, p.78). Thematic Analysis is also flexible regarding the data collection, while interviews have been significantly used, other qualitative data such as websites, reports and newspaper articles have been used as well. (Braun, Clarke, et al. 2019) As Clarke and Braun (2017, p. 297)

states, "the hallmark" of Thematic Analysis is its flexibility. In this way, Thematic Analysis goes beyond counting and gathering words and summarizing the data, it also identifies implicit and explicit data (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012, p. 10) and helps "interpret various aspects of the research topic" (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 79).

However, Nowell et al. (2017, p. 2) alert that this flexibility can cause inconsistency and incoherence when developing themes obtained from the research data. The authors also point out that there is no clear consensus about how researchers should properly approach Thematic Analysis and there is a lack of significant literature in comparison to other well-known methods (e.g. ground theory, ethnography and phenomenology). Because of that, Thematic Analysis has a poorer reputation than other recognized methods, even despite its wide use. (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 79) In fact, some authors state that Thematic Analysis is a tool to be used to support other methods in the analysis of the data, rather than be an independent method itself. (Nowell et al. 2017, p. 2). In the past years though, this scenario has gradually changed as a growing number of authors (e.g. Braun and Clarke 2006; Fugard and Potts 2015; Nowell et al. 2017) have recognized Thematic Analysis as a method itself that when properly applied can generate trustworthy and valuable data.

Thematic Analysis requires the transformation of qualitative information into codes and themes. "Codes are the smallest units of analysis that capture interesting features of the data (potentially) relevant to the research question" (Clarke and Braun 2017, p. 297). Codes, thus, help identify meaningful units of text, facilitate the interpretation of the data, enable the focus on specific aspects of the data and determine relevant themes. They are the foundation to the subsequent stage which is the development of themes. "A theme is a pattern found in the information that at minimum describes and organizes the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon" (Boyatzis 1998, p. 4). Themes, thus, provide the necessary structure to organize and report the "researcher's analytic observation" (Clarke and Braun 2017, p. 297).

Themes can either be generated inductively or deductively. The first is a bottom up or data driven approach, while the second is a top-down or theory driven approach. (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 83) Inductive approach is strongly related to the data themselves, pays less attention to the research question and produces a more detailed overview of the overall data. In this approach, the process of coding is independent from any existing coding frame (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 83) and enables the researcher to explore fields that have been little investigated (Clarke and Braun 2017, p. 297), which is the case of Solidarity Economy in the Nordic welfare state. Deductive approach, in contrast, is strongly related to the research

question and analytic interest of the researcher. This approach provides a more detailed analysis of specific aspects of the data and generates little description of the overall data (Nowell et al. 2017, p. 2).

This research adopts both approaches as it aims to provide a more detailed description of the overall data while pays special attention to specific aspects of the data that is more relevant to the research question. The mixed approach enables to disclose the identity of Solidarity Economy in Finland by providing a detailed statement about actors' perspective. At the same, it is possible to focus on more relevant information to the research question, which is the enabling and constraining factors that Solidarity Economy faces in the Nordic welfare state.

Furthermore, Thematic Analysis has two levels in which themes have to be identified, semantic (explicit) and latent (interpretative). In the semantic approach, "the themes are identified within the explicit or surface meanings, and the analyst is not looking for anything beyond what a participant has said" (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 84). Meaning that the development of a theme reflects the explicit content of the data. Latent approach, on the other hand, identifies or examines "the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations - and ideologies - that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data" (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 84). Meaning that the latent approach moves beyond of what has been said and the development of themes presents assumptions and concepts underlying the data.

This research adopts the semantic approach as it provides a more descriptive and realistic report of the actors' perspectives of Solidarity Economy. For this purpose, the semantic approach works better than the latent approach as the research does not aim to go beyond the explicit content of the data. Instead, the research presents a more constructivist account of the assumptions underlying the content of the data.

In order to generate the themes and sub-themes this research uses the well-recognized and widely applied step-by-step guide of Braun and Clarke (2006). This tool is a useful guideline to conduct Thematic Analysis that consists in six steps (bellow). The steps do not necessarily need to be used in a linear and rigid way, on the contrary, during the analysis it is common to move back and forth through each step according to the need of the researcher.

- Step 1: Familiarizing yourself with your data
 - This step consists in reading and re-reading multiple times the data (for this research the data is the transcribed interviews) in a proactive way. The researcher aims to become familiar with the overall data and search for pattern and meanings. At this step, some notes of early impressions were written down, parts of the text were underlined, each interview was summarized and ideas of coding were identified.

- Step 2: Generating initial codes
 - This step is the process of coding where the researcher creates codes and organizes them into meaningful sets. The codes identify characteristics of the data that are interesting to the researcher and indicate "the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon" (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 88). In other words, the researcher identifies important parts of texts that "capture the qualitative richness of the phenomenon" (Nowell et al. 2017, p. 6). Following, some examples of codes used for this research.

Data extract	Codes
"there is a history on the term solidarity because it is kind of related with the Soviet Union and that kind of left politics, communism, socialism" (interviewee 9)	Solidarity Economy and Communism
"I think whatever name we want to call it. Let it be whatever name we want to call it, it doesn't need to be Solidarity Economy" (Interviewee 1)	The relevance of the term
"First of all. Solidarity Economy there is very little actors that will define themselves as Solidarity Economy" (Interviewee 1)	Small movement
"It [high level of social security] makes people passive who have things easily" (Interviewee 2)	Discouragement
"So, these kind of things (public service provision) give the possibility to people that are interested in creating different initiatives, creating alternatives" (Interviewee 9)	Public services as an enabling factor
"Since the welfare is kind of under attack maybe affects people [volunteers of the enterprises where the actor works] coming in as well and helping out... Then, when they will have to struggle more for more for their own needs" (Interviewee 3)	Reduction of social security may affect Solidarity Economy
"I think there is good possibilities because we also have good network skills and we can do our own networks". (Interviewee 4)	Grassroots network
"I think the next generation, there are so many young people who are super worried about their future" (Interviewee 6)	Potential interest in Solidarity Economy
"What it could do it could do to enable some sort of tax benefit to some sort of social cooperatives for example" (interviewee 8)	Governmental actions

Figure 4.1 Step 2

- Step 3: Searching for themes
 - This step consists in the interpretative analysis of the coded data where the focus is "at a broader level of themes" (Braun and Clarke 2006, p.

89). The coded data are sorted and collated into patterns, which become the potential themes. The researcher, thus, acquires an initial and broad sense of the themes. At this step, it was generated the primary 13 themes.

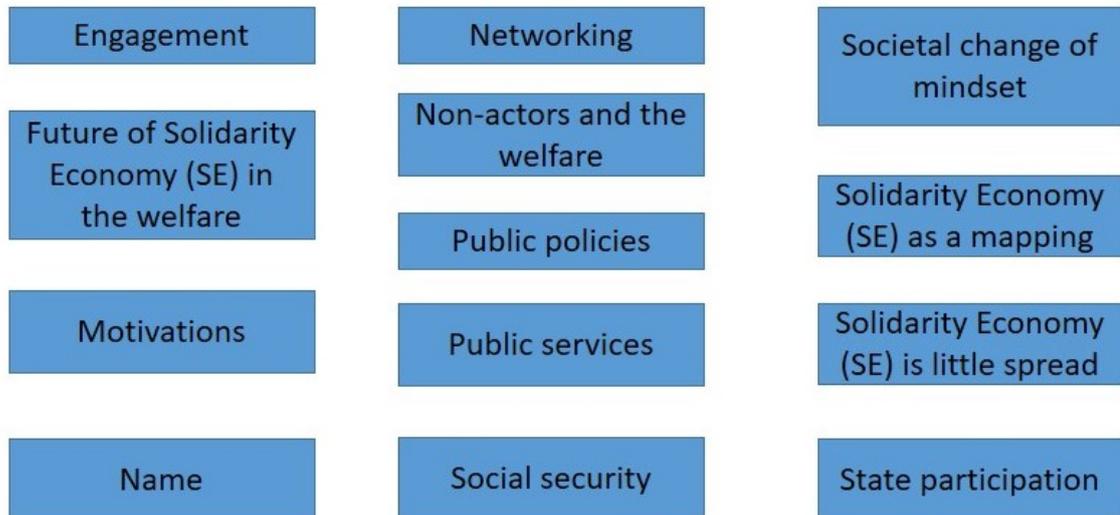


Figure 4.2 Step 3

- Step 4: Reviewing themes
 - This step consists in the refinement of the potential themes. The refinement involves the separation, discard and merge of those themes or even the creation of new themes. At this step, the themes should be clearly distinct from one another and their data should be coherent and meaningful patterns according to the research aim. Finally, the refined themes should reflect "meanings evident in the data set as a whole" (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 91). In other words, they should be able to tell a story about the collected data.

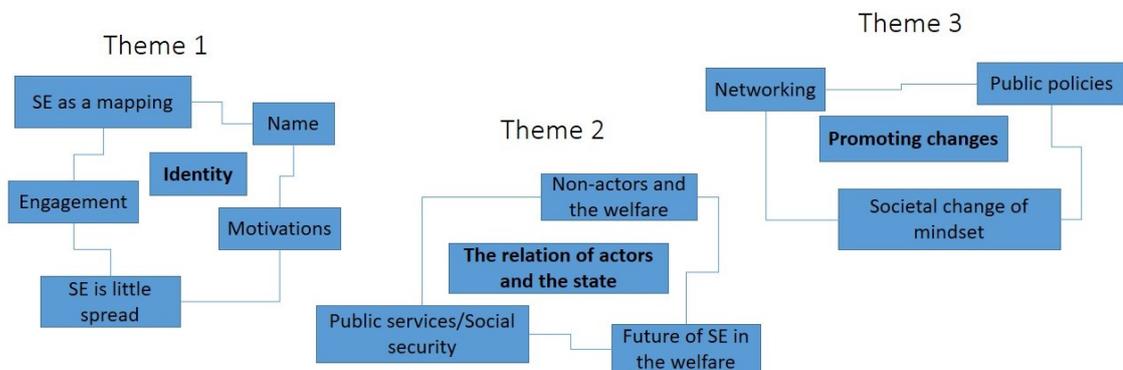


Figure 4.3 Step 4

- Step 5: Defining and naming themes
 - This step consists in the further refinement and the definition of the themes. The further refinement involves the identification of whether or not each theme contains sub-themes. At this step, the "essence" of what each theme is about should be identified and demonstrated what feature of the data they capture (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 92).

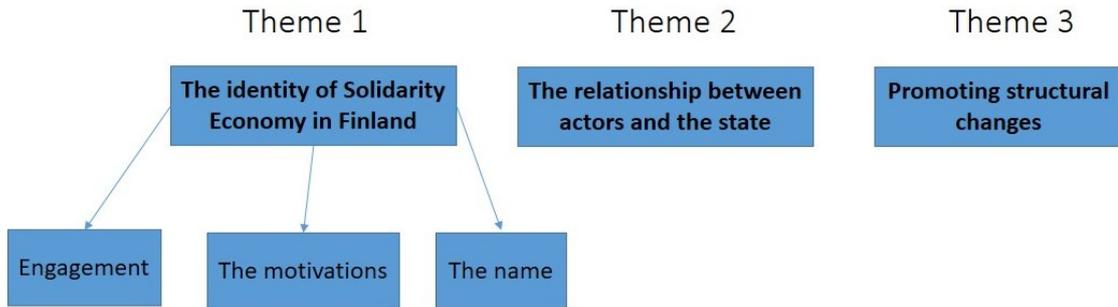


Figure 4.4 Step 5

- Step 6: Producing the report
 - This step consists the "final analysis and its write-up of the report (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 92). The final analysis should produce a general story about what the chosen themes reveal about the topic. The aim is to tell the complex story about the data in a way that shows the merit of and validate the analysis.

5 Analysis

Through the steps presented in the previous section, I identified the following themes which I present elaborated in this chapter. All the themes are fundamental to the research aim, which is to investigate how the Nordic welfare of Finland constrains and enables the development of Solidarity Economy. In addition, all the themes are in conversation with the literature review of the chapter 2 and are analyzed through the lens of structuration theory with focus on the concept of rules (legitimation and signification) and resources (domination).

Theme 1, *The identity of Solidarity Economy in Finland*, reveals what Solidarity Economy really is in Finland. This is primordial to demonstrate what phenomena is being studied. Theme 2, *The relationship between actors and the state*, identifies the available resources that can be used to the development of Solidarity Economy. It also identifies the interpretative schemes of the actors of Solidarity Economy and non-actors regarding the role of the welfare in relation to Solidarity Economy. This theme helps to identify relevant aspects that constrain and enable the development of Solidarity Economy in the Nordic welfare. Theme 3, *Promoting structural changes*, identifies alternative and shared novel ways to promote change in the traditional societal norms and normative rules of the Nordic welfare, as well as the barriers to the development of Solidarity Economy.

5.1 The identity of Solidarity Economy in Finland

This theme discloses the identity of Solidarity Economy in Finland in terms of size, age, type of economic practices, engagement and motivations of actors and the acceptance of the term by Finnish society. Knowing the identity of Solidarity Economy is fundamental to answer the research question.

Solidarity Economy in Finland has been formed by a few like-minded individuals, actors, who are motivated to challenge the dominant economic system through local alternative economic practices and build a more plural, cooperative and sustainable economy. There is a broad perception among the actors that Solidarity Economy is a valuable way to connect and strengthen alike grassroots initiatives and thereby gradually change the current economic system.

Interviewee 9 - But, in mind I don't see Solidarity Economy as a revolution, but creating connections in the grassroots and make it bigger and bigger in that way kind of changing structures little by little, step by step.

In Finland, Solidarity Economy is broad enough to embrace a wide range of enterprises (e.g. community-supported agriculture, coffee cooperative and art gallery), but narrow enough to include only enterprises that share similar principles and motivations. Solidarity Economy, though, is still barely known by the population at large and encompasses a reduced number of enterprises, even despite of attempts to increase its visibility through workshops, social meetings, networks and social media.

The few enterprises that coin themselves as Solidarity Economy take strong stance against the dominant economic system. They, to a certain extent, share and embrace the principles of Solidarity Economy in their operation. This is expressed in different forms such as the democratic decision-making among the members who are part of the enterprises and prioritization of social and environmental aspects over the maximization of profits. These enterprises offer local economic alternatives of production, consumption and living.

However, it is also important to note that Solidarity Economy is relatively new in Finland and, as previously mentioned, little spread. The enterprises that are part of the movement either emerged before the introduction of Solidarity Economy in Finland or without previous connections with the concept. In other words, Solidarity Economy did not have much influence in the emergence of the enterprises. Rather, Solidarity Economy has worked as a mapping and connector of those enterprises, though not all are in constant interaction with one another, and a source of motivation and vision of ideal economy.

5.1.1 Engagement

In this sub-theme, the actors present their own signification of Solidarity Economy as well as their engagement with what they consider to be alternatives to the dominant economic system.

Solidarity Economy in Finland is a rather new concept that was imported less than 10 years ago. The country, on the other hand, has a solid history of cooperatives and associations. Some actors even coined Finland as the "land of associations". That is one of the reasons why Solidarity Economy is still timid and little spread in Finland where a few enterprises put themselves as part of the movement. This, though, does not mean that alternative economic practices are nonexistent in Finland, rather they either carry other names (e.g. sharing economy and green economy) or are not politicized in terms of taking strong stances against the current economic system.

Interviewee 1 - Now, there is all kind of stuff [alternative economic practices] happening in Finland, in Helsinki, but it is extremely ad-hoc.

There is no political process

All this kind of popular things [alternative economic practices], which are nice but they are not going to do the core, economic democratization. Therefore, a bit problematic from my point of view.

It is not surprising, thus, that Finland has a small number of Solidarity Economy actors. While a few actors already had been in contact with Solidarity Economy because of their connections and work with countries in the South hemisphere. Many had its first contact with the concept in the past years through a network of like-minded people that has advocated the commons and Solidarity Economy in Finland. Either "older" or "newer" actors clearly recognize themselves as being part of the Solidarity Economy movement. This can be perceived through different ways. One evident way is the common principles that actors share with Solidarity Economy.

Interviewee 1 - I've kind of forgotten about it [Solidarity Economy] when I was busy with our time bank. Then, it was because Max ¹ invited us to a Solidarity Economy workshop at a Social Forum in Helsinki a few years ago, 7 or 8 years ago. I said Solidarity Economy! That is our picture of economy. It was just like forgotten. So me and Max started this kind of Solidarity Economy stuff, we started to put it forward.

Interviewee 8 - For me Solidarity Economy when I first time heard about the concept I felt that was some kind of ethical economy, which people do good things for the good. Like a moral economy. First of all, in the very beginning I didn't become interested in Solidarity Economy so much because I saw it only as ethical approach that you have to have certain values. But, only after I realized that they are also this practical that things are done differently. And, in Solidarity Economy people try to organize alternative kinds of production... Which I'm interested in.

This recognition of being part of the Solidarity Economy movement can also be perceived through actors' advocacy of the concept, their consumption patterns of giving preference to consume in Solidarity Economy enterprises (or enterprises that do not coin themselves as Solidarity Economy, but share similar principles) and their attempts to build a broad Solidarity Economy network. But, more profoundly through their deep engagement in the Solidarity Economy enterprise or initiative that they are involved as a full time worker, volunteer or member.

Interviewee 1 - one thing I know is that our coop is good thing. The hours I spent on it I'll never call a waste of time

¹The name has been changed to protect the person's identity

they [members of the enterprises where the actor work] came from different areas, they have not been in the Solidarity Economy. But, they wouldn't be there, doing what they are doing, trying to find every possibility to be able to stay there. They wouldn't have been doing that if they were not looking for exactly Solidarity Economy development.

On the top of that, many actors also consider themselves as part of a broader movement where individuals and groups are in constant search for systematic alternatives to the current economic system. The actors are not only engaged with Solidarity Economy, they are commonly involved in many practices and initiatives that they believe to be prominent alternatives. Such practices and initiatives include researches, cooperatives, fair trade, conscious consumption and seminars, that are not necessarily Solidarity Economy, but they are all related in many ways. "That's been going on for a few years. That is kind of my daily life" (interviewee 9) said one actor in reference to her long list of projects, activities and practices that she has been involved for the last years.

5.1.2 The motivations

This sub-theme shows what motivates actors to develop Solidarity Economy. The motivations are alternative ways of doing things that can change rules and the way both allocative and authoritative resources are coordinated. Solidarity Economy, in this way, is the source where actors can exercise their agency to promote their desired goals.

The actors demonstrated many motivations to work towards alternative economic practices. The motivations can raise from a very specific reason such as finding alternatives to the increase of precarious working conditions in Finland to a broad perspective of transforming the current economic system. However, the motivations are in most of the cases common among the actors. Even in the case of the actors who have a stronger particular motivation (e.g. the precariat movement), they still share similar and other equal motivations with the other actors. Indeed, in general, the actors share a common rejection of the current economic system and its dominant practices, economic liberalization, austerity policies and the marketization of public services. Those rejections together with social and environmental concerns are the main the sources of actors' motivations to work towards alternative economic practices.

The actors' motivations are to a great extent in harmony with the bottom-up aspects that have driven the worldwide scaling up of Solidarity Economy (section 2.3). The actors oppose to consumerism; perceive that the increase of wealth concentration, social issues and inequality are consequences of the "deregulation, state

retrenchment, financialization and commodification” (Utting 2015, p. 6); and are concerned to shift the current dominant economic system into something more democratic, equal and plural.

Following, I state in detail some shared relevant motivations that drive actors in Finland to be engaged with Solidarity Economy:

- Promoting the participation of ordinary citizens in the economic matters that are in general exclusively dominated by public authorities and large private organizations. This means that ordinary citizens would have more power to interfere in and shape the economy in which they are part.

Interviewee 7 - Solidarity movement for me means also develop ways to behave in the economy that we take the power in our hands

- Building alternative economic practices that are not profit and money based.

Interviewee 2 - A big part here [the Solidarity Economy enterprise where the actor works] is to try to work without money. Being able to be here without money

Interviewee 4 - People [members of the enterprises where the actor work] are not interested on money

- Promoting social equality through alternative economic practices that are antagonist to the dominant practices where cooperation, human well-being, shared decision-making, equality and environmental preservation are prioritized over profit-making.

Interviewee 1 - I mean, we want the guarantee of basic rights, basic needs, but at the same time we also acknowledge that we could be doing certain things in different ways... done in a way to put forward values of another economy... Values of another economy which people can take their place.

Interviewee 6 - We have less of the inequality, but its growing and I think that it is the broken economic system.

- Concern with the increase lack of job security, unemployment and loss of workers' rights, which have been intensified because of the flexibility of labor laws and exponential growth of automation and globalization.

Interviewee 8 - My interest to cooperatives came from the precariat movement. Because the precariat. My interest was that the precariat could by establishing workers cooperatives somehow help itself.

- Need to create alternative economic spaces where individuals can share collective projects, exchange knowledge, promote activism, enhance the sense of community and encourage non-conventional economic practices.

Interviewee 4 - We [the Solidarity Economy enterprise where the actor works] share different kind of skills here. There are many people doing old building renovation, some people are interested about agriculture, some people are interested in art, all kinds of anarchists... So we can be supportive background for them... We also try to spread these kind of activism.

- Conscious, local and organic consumption

Interviewee 4 - we [the Solidarity Economy enterprise where the actor works] are trying to get food from this agriculture projects, like cooperatives. So we are supporting this kind of things more than doing them

Interviewee 6 - I'm almost eating only Oma Maa [a community-supported agriculture] food. I still go to the supermarket to buy some food but I'm pretty self-sustainable with Oma Maa.

- Contributing to make the world a better place

Interviewee 6 - And for me is like contribution, what can I do in this. What can I pay back, make the world a better place

Interviewee 9 - Being able to find ways to improve people's well-being and equality. I mean I'm an idealistic in a way. So just to make the world a better in a way is my motivation. Yeah, I'm just trying to do my part. Do it together with people because that is where the power of Solidarity Economy is.

5.1.3 The name

This sub-theme demonstrates the interpretative schemes of the actors and non-actors regarding the name Solidarity Economy. It also shows how these interpretative schemes can affect the development of Solidarity Economy in Finland.

Differently from many parts of the world where solidarity is seen as unity among individuals with similar interests or mutual help and support. In Finland and in many eastern countries, solidarity may not be seen as a something positive by many people. This happens because solidarity is strongly related with the controversial Soviet Union and reminds the hard discourse of communism and socialism. This

perception is more explicit among older people who experienced the Soviet Union era.

Interviewee 1 - That has to do with the whole thing of the red past in eastern. In all these countries, Solidarity Economy and the commons is not gonna ring very well. The commons is ok here, but Solidarity Economy is not ok here because for the older people, for younger people it has started to change. Solidaarisuus [solidarity in Finnish] rings the bell of communism... So that is just one issue.

Interviewee 9 - there is a history on the term solidarity because it is kind of related with the Soviet Union and that kind of left politics, communism, socialism. Also all the facts that happened and people don't see solidarity as a value

The association between solidarity and the tough left discourse of decades ago, though, is a generational issue that may mostly affect people who lived in the Soviet Union period. The younger generation, on the other hand, may not perceive solidarity as something intimidating and negative.

Interviewee 9 - this is for more people who have been there living the era of the soviet union and being in contact with that kind of left politics that is kind of controversial. But, I'm that generation I don't see that anymore

However, even though the terminology issue does not affect all the generations and the actors consider solidarity a positive value that should be put forward, the term solidarity itself is a reason that can move individuals away from Solidarity Economy in Finland. Therefore, in order to Solidarity Economy reaches wider acceptance and visibility, it was even suggested that the name should be reconsidered.

Interviewee 4 - Maybe it [Solidarity Economy] has to be named in other way

Interviewee 6 - But, let's just not call it Solidarity Economy people would think that sounds too communistic.

In fact, none of the actors emphasized a strong importance to maintain the name Solidarity Economy in Finland. It appears to be more relevant to focus on the values that should be antagonist to the dominant economic values and be open for many terminologies that also work towards similar goals.

Interviewee 1 - I think whatever name we want to call it. Let it be whatever name we want to call it, it doesn't need to be Solidarity Economy... Whatever we call it, which is not profit but other values. And, to allow that citizens to stand their positions on that.

Interviewee 9 - I think that this [having many terminologies] is really a good point because people see these things differently although there is similar goal. We need to keep the diversity there.

5.2 The relationship between actors and the state

The core of this theme is to show how power is applied regarding the utilization of available resources in the Nordic welfare. The available resources are divided into allocative and authoritative. Allocative resources include public services, money and social security, while authoritative resources include the capability of individuals to be engaged with Solidarity Economy (e.g. time and effort), their skills and knowledge. This theme shows that the utilization of such resources can vary according to individual's perspective.

Furthermore, this theme identifies how actors and non-actors perceive the role of the Nordic welfare regarding the development of Solidarity Economy. Finally, this theme provides potential scenarios to the future development of Solidarity Economy in the Nordic welfare which has had its capacity to provide social security and high quality of public services reduced in the last three decades.

There is a consensus among the actors that the welfare state in Finland has been dismantled in the past decades because of the intensification of the austerity policies and marketization of public services. As previously mentioned, the actors strongly reject this political and economic agenda. During the interviews, they often criticized this agenda as a real threat to the well-established welfare state and potential cause to social issues. Words and expressions such as "taken down", "destruction", "broken down" and "attack of the Nordic welfare" were used to describe their views on the current situation of the welfare in Finland. In addition, they do not demonstrate a high expectation in the continuation of a solid welfare state.

Interviewee 6 - It [the collapse of the welfare] is not a matter of whether is coming, but when it is happening.

Interviewee 9 - Well, health services are being going towards destruction already.

However, despite the concern with the dismantling of the welfare, the actors still recognize that the state in Finland provides a relatively high quality of public services and social security, especially when compared to many other states. This

is expressed in the acknowledgement of the high quality of life that individuals possess in consequence of the welfare provision. It is also expressed in the form of compliments to different public services such as education, health and library system, which are still considered to be of high quality.

Interviewee 1 - I want to see as a positive thing in the sense that we still have something of the welfare state, even though it's been a lot of broken down, more and more, but we still can say we have some form of welfare state here in the Nordics.

Interviewee 9 - The welfare services that we still have that are quite good... Education, access to information. Having a really nice library system that everyone connects to information through. So, these kind of things gives the possibility to people that are interested in creating different initiatives, creating alternatives

The public service provision and social security offered by the welfare are seen as relevant assets that enable individuals to work on their personal interests. Individuals who are concerned in developing Solidarity Economy have the possibilities to qualify themselves and devote their time in such projects. This means that actors or potential actors can be highly skilled, well-educated and use a large part of their time to develop Solidarity Economy.

Interviewee 1 - in Finland, possibilities yes. We have possibilities because of the skills

Interviewee 3 - When the welfare state provides like childcare, gives you benefits, health care and free education. When those things are provided. When your livelihood is somehow provided. Then you have the extra time to maybe work with different kinds of projects and perhaps like Solidarity Economy. Maybe that is the case for some.

Greece, which is a well-known case among many of the actors because of its substantial growth of Solidarity Economy practices in the last years in consequence of the financial crises, was more than once mentioned to better emphasize the possibilities to develop Solidarity Economy in the Nordic welfare. The goal of such statements is to highlight the potential of the development of Solidarity Economy in the Nordic welfare, rather than a single comparison between the particular contexts of Finland and Greece.

Differently from Greece where Solidarity Economy has expanded because of the lack of the welfare (Daskalaki, Fotaki, and Sotiropoulou 2018), in Finland, Solidarity Economy has the opportunity to be expanded because of the high capability of the

welfare. As one actor stated that in Finland there are more chances to develop Solidarity Economy because of the Nordic welfare.

Interviewee 1 - Perhaps this would be easier to do then, let's say a place like Greece. In Greece, everything is broken down. I've meet great Greek actors doing great things. But, it is a very hard struggle. Everything is broken down. So, in that sense, in the welfare state we could have more possibilities. It feels like it.

However, the recourse to Solidarity Economy or similar practices tend to decrease when the capacity of the state to generate effective social policies is high (Utting, van Dijk, and Mathei 2014, p. 11). Indeed, it was often noted that the still high quality of the welfare provision where the quality of life is relatively high and social issues are relatively small (e.g. low poverty) can give the impression to the population at large, non-actors, that alternative economic practices are not necessary. The word "passive" was used by some actors to describe the inertia of the population in relation to alternative economic practices such as Solidarity Economy.

Interviewee 6 - I think that this [lack of commitment] is the biggest problem for the alternative economies in Finland. If you don't have to, if it is not like that you don't get any food or services unless you start committing and doing yourself. Then it is too hard, because you can leave a very easy live without the commitment.

Interviewee 3 - Working with the welfare state it could be something that enable, but it makes people passive as well. If everything is taken care.

In addition, another factor that discourages the search for and engagement with alternatives that require structural changes is the high confidence of individuals in the actions of the government. In Finland there is still a high amount of trust on authorities (Statistics Finland 2018).

Interviewee 2 - I think that is really a big aspect of Finnish society, people really put trust on authorities. Even though there is this really big cases of corruption and still people trust policy.

Interviewee 3 - I think people have a lot of faith in politics in the fact that if we have the right people in the government than the state can manage.

The enabling factors to the development of Solidarity Economy in the Nordic welfare, thus, appear to be relevant and advantageous for ideological individuals

who perceive the current economic system as problematic. As stated by one actor (interviewee 6), individuals who are interested in alternative approaches have the "means" to foment such alternatives. While non-actors may lack the motivation and need to work towards a structural transformation.

Interviewee 9 - the negative factor for alternative economy in the welfare state context is that people think they are still very well off and they don't need an alternative. They don't see that the well-being of everyone needs to be kind of improved in ways that require more structural change. And because in Finland there is a big middle class and there is not a lot of poverty. The majority are just enjoying their life and they don't think that the problems that are relatively, in Finnish context, the poverty that is relative is not big enough a problem that would want to change the system. So, I think it is up to people who are more ideological who conceive as a kind of global issue as well, not just about improving the life of the poor in Finland, but it is also improving the life in many ways for everyone

The inertia in the search for alternative economic practices also relates to the fact that Finnish society has been developed and organized with a central role of the state. Because of that, Finnish people are highly used to rely on the state in the search for solutions for societal issues. The state has been very strong among individuals and political actors from different ideologies. As noted by one actor (interviewee 8), Finnish society is "very state centric" and initiatives that rely on self-organization have a difficult time to be developed.

Interviewee 8 - Then, Finnish people have been trained and somehow educated to live in the welfare state. We are always looking at the state and the state solution. The state interest thinking in Finland is very strong. Also, Finnish society has been organized around the state very strongly. The state question has always been very strong from the left and from the right political sides. Everybody making demands that the states organize this. The state is in the very center of the Finnish society. And in that sense Solidarity Economy if realize in self organizing. Then, in that sense, it is hard to Finnish people to start doing themselves different kinds of production and networks.

It is no wonder that the structural changes (marketization and austerity policies) that have gradually affected the welfare in Finland have raised a very high concern among many individuals who believe that their social benefits and capacity of public service provision have been reduced. Individuals are much more concerned about

protecting the welfare than searching for alternative economic practices such as Solidarity Economy. Even the leftists who have often been at the forefront of Solidarity Economy (Castelao Caruana and Srnec 2013) have spent their energy and effort in defending the welfare state, rather than working towards alternative approaches.

Interviewee 1 - what is happening here is that the welfare is being privatized, people feel that you either have to defend the state, and is the same with the lefts, and it is very difficult to talk about co-production [alternative economic practices in cooperation with the state]

Interviewee 8 - But, the left in Finland is very conservative when it comes to the welfare state. And even, if they sympathize to Social and Solidarity Economy, they do not themselves put energy and time into working on that. They say they are all welcome, they very fine support this. But, then, in practice, they put all their energy and time to organize defense for the welfare state.

Furthermore, the structural changes in the welfare have also raised important points and concerns regarding the future development of Solidarity Economy in Finland. Four relevant scenarios whether or not Solidarity Economy may increase as a consequence of the reduction of the welfare were pointed out.

First, individuals are likely to spend more effort to secure their basic needs, rather than deeply commit themselves to Solidarity Economy initiatives. It is important to mention that many of the Solidarity Economy enterprises and initiatives are still highly dependent on voluntarily based work.

Interviewee 3 - Since the welfare is kind of under attack maybe affects people [volunteers of the enterprises where the actor works] coming in as well and helping out... Then, when they will have to struggle more for their own needs

Interviewee 9 - the pressure from social security policies is now growing and growing on people who are unemployed and in social security that there is less and less energy of this people who are unemployed or students who are on social security in a way that constrains peoples' ability to be innovative

Second, similarly to what has happened in Greece, Solidarity Economy can grow to supply the lack of public service provision and social security. In this scenario, Solidarity Economy emerges as a response to the lack of basic needs, rather than a choice to promote structural changes. One actor even sees the expansion of Solidarity Economy as something inevitable.

Interviewee 2 - if it [Solidarity Economy] will be growing in Finland? It has to grow because the welfare state will be like... I don't think there is much of saving of the welfare state anymore

Third, the solid historical background of associativism and cooperativism in Finland can lead to an expansion of these practices in order to supply the lack of public service and social protection. There is still not a consensus though whether such practices are considered to be Solidarity Economy. Many associations which already work as an extension of the state in certain welfare role and even religious groups can have a bigger participation to supply the lack of social protection. In fact, socially vulnerable individuals have already relied on those alternatives to meet their basic needs (Lindberg, Nygrd, and Nyqvist 2018).

Interviewee 8 - certainly we do have very poor people as well, people who are disadvantaged, who suffer from the lack of social security and income and basic rights. Then, we also have unemployed people, precarious people. But, then we have this associations who organize some kind of social help, we have church that also do it, like organizing direct help. But, nobody is organizing so much self-help to organize economy.

While big well-established cooperatives that are relevant players in the market economy and even smaller cooperatives can also increase their participation in some of the role of the welfare in the provision of services.

Interviewee 8 - In Finland, in the becoming years, there may have some value based, which is different from the market actors. But, on the other hand I wouldn't expect a revolutionary change. But I assume that there will be some workers' cooperatives and social cooperatives which will come into this social and health care sector because of this changes. And, also because it will become more easy to establish private enterprises on those sectors in the future.

This point in particular raised a skepticism whether such cooperatives should be included in the Solidarity Economy movement because they carry very similar principles of Solidarity Economy, but at the same time they often use market-based principles to develop their business. The fact that enterprises are identified as cooperatives do not necessarily mean that they follow the principles of Solidarity Economy or even the basic principles of cooperatives (Laville 2015, p.48). Therefore, an issue regarding the ambiguity of the concept of Solidarity Economy was also highlighted.

Interviewee 8 - Because it [Solidarity Economy] is very hard to define, for example, Osuuspankki [which was mentioned to be a potential social/health care provider in the near future], should be mapped or not. It is a cooperative formally, and if you go to the web pages there are clear moral and ethical values. In that sense, if you look from the outside is formally a cooperative and it has a very strong social responsibility and social program. It should be mapped in this Solidarity Economy map or not?... That's connected to fact that Solidarity Economy is a vague concept. Not very easy to say what is and is not Solidarity Economy.

On one hand, the identification of enterprises that use market-based principles as Solidarity Economy can lead to a delegitimization of the concept, just as it has happened with other prominent concepts such as sustainability and sharing economy (Hawlitschek et al. 2018). Especially, because Finland has thousands of cooperatives (PRH 2018) and certainly most of them do not fulfill the principles of Solidarity Economy. On the other hand, the recognition of such enterprises as Solidarity Economy can broaden its network, which is considered to be crucial to the development of Solidarity Economy (RIPESS 2015, p. 9). As Miller (2013, p.526) alerts, certain flexibility in the conceptualization of Solidarity Economy can actually strengthen the capacity of organizing on the ground actions that can promote transformations.

One actor (interviewee 6) even stated that it can be "problematic" to stick rigidly to the principles of Solidarity Economy because different individuals may be working towards similar goals, but being extremely ideological can keep these individuals and their initiatives a part. She recognizes the importance to keep the principles, but she raises the question whether Solidarity Economy can be expanded in that way. Another relevant factor in being very ideological is that enterprises face difficulties to keep the principles of Solidarity Economy and be self-sustainable at the same time.

Interviewee 6 - It is important to keep the principles. But, then sometimes I think. Is it possible to grow like this?

Interviewee 1 - It is very difficult, as we see to just a single actor, stand, face the market, have your profound different values.

Fourth, the austerity and pro-market agenda is still not intense enough in terms that alternative practices have to replace some fundamental role of the welfare state. So, it is not expected an expansion of Solidarity Economy as a consequence of the lack of the welfare. Greece was mentioned again together with Argentina as examples to differentiate the still relatively safe and comfortable situation in Finland in terms of social policies.

Interviewee 8 - Well, in Greece is quite evident that Solidarity Economy and all kinds of social initiatives have flourished after the crisis. After the crisis, people have had the necessity to start organizing things differently and independently. But, in Finland, yes, we most lack this kind of necessity.

Interviewee 9 - What we've seen in places like Greece or Argentina earlier is that Solidarity Economy activity increases after the austerity policies. Of course, with the history of the welfare state in Finland, I think we are still very far from those situations. I mean I don't like the austerity policies here in Finland either, but I don't think they are still as rough as in other parts of the world.

5.3 Promoting structural change

In this theme, the actors present alternative ways of doing things in the traditional Nordic welfare society by pointing out certain factors that can encourage and provide more solid directions to the development of Solidarity Economy. The actors state that a broader network and the creation of public policies are fundamental to promote shared novel ways of presenting Solidarity Economy and alike practices. The actors, thus, challenge the traditional Nordic welfare society which often has implicit norms of how things should be done.

The actors share a general agreement that the promotion of structural changes can just happen with grassroots efforts that connect many individuals who have similar mindset, but are not necessarily involved with Solidarity Economy. In fact, none of the actors pointed out the need and intention to restrict the network to Solidarity Economy actors only. On the contrary, a better collaboration with individuals from other movements was considered essential to promote changes because the diversity of thoughts and motivations can strengthen the capacity to challenge the dominant economic system.

Interviewee 7 - So we have come to this where you need to do something together. Being in economy like these movements is something that we have to be together to do something.

Because we all have our individual motives and it is about sharing them together, to use tools like need circles, for instance. But really, it's about hearing other kind of motives and then coming together, putting things together. There are different ways of doing that

A broad and plural network is particularly important in Finland because the country has many fragmented movements with similar principles and goals. This

scenario is seen as a potential to strengthen and promote a genuine cooperation among the different movements.

Interviewee 9 - I think that what is needed rather is coming together the alter globalization movements in Finland. Because there are people with the same mindset. But, they are kind of fragmented and the groups think alike but chose different tools. For example, the groups that have been opposing the transatlantic trade agreement, I totally support, but I haven't being doing anything about because I've being focused more in the practical. Both are needed, but coming together as a movement and thinking about a bigger scale and how to strategize something together is something that is needed.

Furthermore, some actors expressed optimism because the increase awareness of social and environmental issues can encourage more individuals to search for alternative ways to consume, produce and live. This inclination towards alternatives is seen as a potential to the actors because it can gradually strengthen the grassroots movements.

Interviewee 6 - So, now people are getting kind of awakening... I think it is kind of coming back the sharing and community. I definitely think that there is a lot of potential.

However, despite that grassroots efforts have the crucial role to promote Solidarity Economy and alike practices, "we really feel that the change will come from the people, from the grassroots" (interviewee 7), and the skepticism about the governmental pro-market agenda that can constrain the development of alternative economic practices. "But, it is not easy because here is the neoliberal law, which is ruling. So, all the time decisions [based on the neoliberal agenda] are being made" (interviewee 1). It was also recognized that the public sector through different levels can play an important role to promote structural changes through a wide range of public policies. Therefore, many public policies inclined towards alternative economic practices were suggested. As Mendell and Alain (2015) urge, an expansion of Solidarity Economy relies on the participation of the public sector.

Following, I present the identified public policies and how they can enable the promotion of Solidarity Economy and structural changes.

- Creation of mechanisms that differentiate value-based from conventional market-based enterprises. Subsequently, providing tax benefits to the value-based enterprises, which also include Solidarity Economy enterprises. In this way, the state stimulates the emergence and development of Solidarity Economy and alike enterprises.

Interviewee 6 - What it could do to enable some sort of tax benefit to some sort of social cooperatives for example. That is one thing that is used internationally. That social cooperatives are treated differently than other firms. I think that is happening in Portugal as well. And, in Italy certainly, they have this recognized social cooperatives. They have in their law definition of social cooperatives. In Finland, we have only firms, different kinds of firms and then cooperatives and social cooperatives which we don't have. We have only firms and they are treated in the same way from legal point of view. But, in Italy, for example, they make a difference between different kinds of firms. That is one way to enable Solidarity Economy in the level of this kind of business.

- Availability of free spaces and subsidies of rents to Solidarity Economy and alike practices.

Interviewee 6 - Then, of course, more municipal authorities could provide spaces where you can act and do things for free or for cheap rent. That is one thing that could be done by official authorities and municipalities for example.

- Creation of university incubators which via academic and technical expertise foment the development of Solidarity Economy enterprises

Interviewee 9 - So, I've been really excited about incubators since then and I really want to create something like that in Finland, but it's more like a lifelong process for me. And because I think we need more actors involved in Solidarity Economy before you can actually start one incubator. Of course, you can start with something small and make connection and push forward some initiatives that are kind of leading towards Solidarity Economy. And, then make it bigger and bigger. That something that really inspires me and could support Solidarity Economy and alternative economy initiatives become a big thing in Finland. Because there is like in any other country, business support, or starting its own business towards the kind of model, getting profit. Although, we have a strong cooperative movement in Finland and there's been for a long time. The cooperatives in Finland don't always fulfill the ideas of alternative economies. Many time they don't, but also in cooperatives there is a big potential I think, but they would also need more support from

this kind of idea of alternative economy. Supporting the well-being and not just producing profit

- Creation of a public department that works as a platform to policy makers, actors and citizens work together to develop Solidarity Economy; and promoting participatory budgeting where ordinary citizens take part in the decision-making process of allocation of public expenditure.

Interviewee 1 - So, I'd really be hoping for real dialogue among citizens and actors around that. They need to organize themselves, they need to have a platform, they need to put their demands. Then I'd be hoping for a department of the city that would truly sees that in the eye this kind of other economy building.

And then, under that platform would be very good if things happened like participatory budgeting or local currency development.

- Promoting the pluralism of the economy through education. That is a form to bring more visibility and acceptance to alternative economic practices and break the paradigm that capitalist practices are the only way to produce, consume and trade.

Interviewee 3 - Education about economy, I guess that would be a good thing on how it is not only capitalism. There is so many different ways to think about it. How to educate people on the economy. Like different ways to make things work. Different ways to perceive the economy... if I think about my own education, what we were taught about economy was very capitalist based and very conforming. Everything that we learned about the society, except maybe for one chapter of something alternative.

6 Discussion and conclusions

This chapter is divided into two sections, discussion and conclusions. In the first, based on each theme, I pay special attention to the research question and draw a discussion on the enabling and constraint factors that Solidarity Economy faces in the Nordic welfare. In the second, I conclude by summarizing the findings of this research and stating the limitations and future studies.

6.1 Discussion

After a broad analysis and overview of Solidarity Economy in the context of the Nordic welfare of Finland, which I consider essential because of the lack of previous studies, in this section, I pay closer attention to the research aim and the structuration theory. More specifically, I narrow the focus on how the Nordic welfare constrains and enables the development of Solidarity Economy in Finland.

Drawn upon the discursive consciousness of the actors of Solidarity Economy in Finland, I again use the concept of Giddens in which structures are rules (legitimation and signification) and resources (domination). In this way, based on each theme of the previous chapter I identify certain features of the structures of the Nordic welfare and how they enable and constrain the development of Solidarity Economy in Finland. This section is divided into three sections that represent each of the themes.

6.1.1 The identity of Solidarity Economy in Finland

The small number of Solidarity Economy actors and enterprises that include themselves as part of the movement have not been able to produce a discourse (signification) that evoke a broader attention of other sectors of Finnish society towards Solidarity Economy, even despite some actors have often been deeply engaged with the advocacy of the concept. Solidarity Economy is a little known and spread concept in Finland where many sectors of society including civil society, politicians and academia are not aware of it. In fact, Solidarity Economy is not even widely spread among like-minded individuals who believe that the dominant economic system is something problematic.

This issue can be the first relevant obstacle to Solidarity Economy gain legitimation beyond its small network and reach other sectors of Finnish society. First, because without reaching a broader audience, it is unlikely that Solidarity Economy raises to a more important status in the mainstream and critical discourse, and further be incorporated in the societal norms (legitimation). A broader legitimation

of Solidarity Economy in Finland, for example, could attract the existing alternative economic practices that are little politicized in terms of taking strong stance against the dominant economy. Second, because the small network can also affect the capacity of actors to exercise power. I believe that more actors and enterprises in the Solidarity Economy network can maximize their allocative (e.g. money) and authoritative (e.g. skills) resources available and thus increase their capacity to influence their everyday encounters. A broader network can boost the means of power of Solidarity Economy actors to promote a more significant change in their surrounding structures.

Another constraining factor that I identified in this theme is how a certain group of individuals understands (signification) the word solidarity. The individuals who experienced the controversial Soviet Union may associate the word solidarity with the communist discourse of that time and may not perceive solidarity as a positive value; instead, they may perceive it as something negative and even intimidating. This interpretative scheme (signification), consequently, can drive these individuals away from being engaged with Solidarity Economy. Therefore, the development of Solidarity Economy in Finland can already meet certain resistance because of the word solidarity itself, even despite this issue concerns a specific group of individuals.

6.1.2 The relationship between actors and the state

This theme reveals that the high level of social security and public services offered by the Nordic welfare can be important assets to the development of Solidarity Economy because individuals can be highly skilled and well-educated while they have their basic needs safeguarded. In this way, skilled individuals can devote much of their time, knowledge and effort to work on their personal interests without having the pressure to secure their basic needs. Individuals can incorporate and utilize these resources to make a difference in their everyday social encounter through the development of Solidarity Economy.

More specifically, the capability of individuals to be engaged with Solidarity Economy as well as their skills and knowledge are authoritative resources in which power can be exercised. The way individuals apply these resources is an aspect of the structure of domination and provide means to work towards Solidarity Economy. Individuals have the possibility to draw upon these authoritative resources to reshape their surrounding structures and consequently transform their surrounding social systems. However, it is important to note that the gradual reduction of social benefits that has taken place in the Nordic welfare of Finland can undermine the capability of individuals to utilize these resources. In this scenario, individuals have to struggle more for certain basic needs and thus have their capability to be engaged with Solidarity Economy hindered.

The Nordic welfare also offers certain infrastructures such as easy access to information and library system that can provide means to individuals influence their surrounding structures. Despite these types of infrastructures are not clearly specified as resources by the structuration theory, I consider them as such. They are related to material phenomena in which individuals can draw upon to develop Solidarity Economy, even though such resources are under the administration of the government. Therefore, I consider them allocative resources that can provide media of power and the way they are utilized is another feature of the structure of domination.

However, the same scenario where the Nordic welfare offers a high capacity of social security and public services can also undermine the development of alternative economic practices such as Solidarity Economy. Individuals under the Nordic welfare may have the perception (signification) that a substantial structural change such as the transformation of the dominant economy is not necessary since they possess a high quality of life and their basic needs are safeguarded by the state. In this sense, this interpretative scheme (signification) does not provide directions towards the development of Solidarity Economy; instead, it may discourage individuals to search for what can be considered radical approaches. Consequently, Solidarity Economy may struggle to gain legitimation in a broader scale and be restricted to the individuals who perceive the dominant economy as something problematic.

Furthermore, the high amount of trust of civil society on the public authorities and the fact that a society has evolved with a central role of the government are other aspects that can possibly constrain the development of Solidarity Economy. These aspects relate to the structures of signification and legitimation in which individuals incorporate and reproduce in their social conduct. The interpretative scheme (signification) and cultural norm (legitimation) that the government has to lead the search for solutions for societal issues and resolve such issues, thus, can undermine alternatives that strongly rely on self-organization. That is the case with the development of Solidarity Economy that despite its reliance on the public sector it is fully dependent on individuals' initiative.

The relationship mentioned above between the civil society and government reflects on the fact that even the leftists who often have led the development of Solidarity Economy are more concentrated on the defense of the welfare. The lefts are more likely to apply their available resources (e.g. skills, knowledge and emotional involvement) to struggle against the reduction of social security and public service provision, instead of pay more significant attention (signification) to the development of Solidarity Economy or alike practices.

The development of Solidarity Economy in Finland is also constrained by the lack of financial resources. The lack of this allocative resource can result in the loss

of autonomy of the Solidarity Economy enterprises, reduce their power to influence their surrounding structures and push them to give up the principles of Solidarity Economy. As it happens elsewhere, in Finland, the Solidarity Economy enterprises struggle to maintain their principles and be financially self-sustainable at the same time.

Another relevant aspect revealed in this theme is that while Solidarity Economy has gained little legitimation in the past decade, cooperatives are strongly rooted in Finland and definitely have a broader capability to reach many sectors of society. Cooperatives are also encompassed by the umbrella concept of Solidarity Economy. In fact, as mentioned in the section 2.3, they are the roots of the concept of Solidarity Economy. However, the inclusion of cooperatives in the Solidarity Economy movement and network often raises skepticism of both actors and scholars because cooperatives commonly use market-based values in their daily operations and do not take strong stances against the dominant economy.

I consider the scenario where cooperatives are culturally embedded (legitimation) in society as an aspect that can enable the development of Solidarity Economy. The incorporation of cooperatives in the Solidarity Economy network can support the movement to reach a broader texture in the Finnish society and increase its legitimation. Today, the small network of Solidarity Economy in Finland does not encompass workers cooperative, for example. The challenge, though, is to find mechanisms to include cooperatives in a way that strengthens Solidarity Economy as well as the included cooperatives, but at the same time do not delegitimize the movement and its goals. Otherwise, Solidarity Economy is likely to lose its purpose of transformative approach.

6.1.3 Promoting structural change

This theme shows that despite Solidarity Economy is a rather small movement and has little legitimation in Finnish society, Finland has other grassroots movements that have common principles and goals with Solidarity Economy. There is a possibility of synergy between Solidarity Economy and such alike movements in a way that can increase their capability to influence their surrounding structures. This synergy, for example, can generate more allocative resources that can be utilized to the development of Solidarity Economy as well as alike initiatives. So that, the construction of a broader Solidarity Economy network can also rely on the involvement of alike grassroots movements.

Another potential enabling factor that this theme reveals is the increase awareness of societal and environmental issues. This factor can encourage individuals to search for alternative ways to live, of which Solidarity Economy is a potential option. Solidarity Economy can increase its significance in the mainstream discourse

(signification) as they can provide certain direction to these individuals who are in the search for alternatives. Consequently, Solidarity Economy can gradually be incorporated in individuals' values and ideals (legitimation).

The increase of legitimation of Solidarity Economy and alike enterprise, for example, can gradually influence in the way the state perceive (signification) such alternatives, which are often treated equally as market-value enterprises. As stated by one actor (interviewee 8), today the public sector does not differentiate market-based from value-based enterprises. This differentiation can lead the state to promote proactive public policies that foment the development of Solidarity Economy. Such policies include tax benefits, creation of university incubators and development of a public department of Solidarity Economy.

6.2 Conclusions

This study set out to investigate Solidarity Economy in the context of the Nordic welfare and answer the research question *How does the Nordic welfare state enable and constrain the development of Solidarity Economy?* The Nordic welfare was chosen to explore Solidarity Economy in a context of low social vulnerability which has had little attention from academia. In order to reach its aim, semi-structured and face-to-face interviews were conducted with key actors of Solidarity Economy in Finland. The rich collected data were compiled into three relevant themes by using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006). The themes were analyzed through the lens of structuration theory (Giddens 1984) which was adopted as the theoretical framework due its ability to unify structure and human agency. In this way, it could be identified the enabling and constraint factors that Solidarity Economy faces in the context of the Nordic welfare of Finland.

First of all, this research contributes to enrich the debate about alternative paths to the economy by providing an extensive literature review of Solidarity Economy and a more clarified picture of the concept in Finland. The disclosure of the identity is relevant to understand the particularities of Solidarity Economy in the context of the Nordic welfare of Finland and to answer the research question. As often mentioned, despite the fact that Solidarity Economy has a certain consensus regarding its principles and economic practices, it can manifest differently according to its particular location. In short, Solidarity Economy in Finland is a small and relatively new movement that has worked to identify and connect alike individuals and initiatives that perceive the dominant economic system as problematic. Both the individuals and initiatives aim to promote and develop an alternative pathway to the economy through local initiatives.

Furthermore, the research identified several aspects that can enable and constrain the development of Solidarity Economy in the Nordic welfare context of Finland. To

achieve this, structuration theory played a crucial role as it enables to analyze structures and human agency without putting primacy to neither of them. Following, I summarize what each of the three themes revealed to answer the research question:

- The identity of Solidarity Economy in Finland
 - Both the fact that the concept of Solidarity Economy is not well spread in Finnish society and that the term itself may generate negative connotation to a specific group of individuals can be a barrier to the development of Solidarity Economy.
- The relationship between actors and the state
 - First, this theme demonstrated that the public service provision, social security and certain infrastructure offered by the Nordic welfare can enable individuals to devote much of their skills, time and effort to develop Solidarity Economy without a major pressure to overwork to secure their basic needs. On the other hand, the same scenario may demonstrate that a significant systemic change in the economic system is not relevant. Second, the high amount of trust of civil society on public authorities and the fact that Finnish society has been developed with a prominent role of the state can undermine the development of initiatives that highly rely on individuals' initiative. Third, the lack of financial resources to operate in the formal market can difficultate Solidarity Economy enterprises to be financially self-sustainable and simultaneously keep their principles. Fourth, cooperatives are strongly rooted in the Finnish society and their incorporation in the Solidarity Economy network can support the movement to gain more legitimation and consequently more power to change their surrounding structures.
- Promoting structural change
 - Solidarity Economy has the possibility to scale up through a synergy with other alike grassroots movements that are active in Finland and through the growing sense of social and environmental issues that can lead more individuals to search for alternative ways to consume, produce and live.

Since this research is a pioneer in investigating Solidarity Economy as a whole in the Nordic welfare context, I hope that it can open ground for future studies. It is important to note though that despite the fact that the Nordic welfare countries share common traits, of which the most recognized is the high level of universalism,

each country has its own particularities in terms of culture and political and economic agenda. Because of that, it can be problematic to generalize this study to the other Nordic countries. Further research in each context could provide a deeper view of Solidarity Economy in the Nordic welfare. Research in other contexts (e.g. Switzerland and New Zealand) where there are low social vulnerability can also enrich the debate about Solidarity Economy and better understand its capacity of transformative approach. As often stressed in this research, one of the highest ambitions of Solidarity Economy is to reorganize and transformed the economy, rather than only be a tool alleviate social issues.

Finally, this research identified relevant public policies that can promote the development of Solidarity Economy. Such public policies include tax-subsides to Solidarity Economy enterprises, availability of free and subsidized public spaces, creation of university incubator and creation of a department of Solidarity Economy. I believe that these policies worth a deeper look and further research to understand their viability.

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APPENDIX A. Semi-structured interviews questions

- How did you get involved with Solidarity Economy?
- Describe and provide details of the Solidarity Economy enterprise you work.
- What Solidarity Economy projects have you been involved?
- How and why does Solidarity Economy (or alternative economic practices) emerge in Finland?
- How do you see the role of Solidarity Economy in Finland?
- How does the Nordic welfare state constrain and enable the development of Solidarity Economy? Taking into consideration that often Solidarity Economy emerges in adverse environment (social issues, poverty and economic problems), can this high capacity of social security and public service provision that the welfare provides to its citizens be prosperous to the development of Solidarity Economy? On the other hand, how they can undermine the development of Solidarity Economy?
- How do you perceive Solidarity Economy in the future in Finland? Taking into consideration that there has been an intensification of austerity policies and increase of pro-market solutions to public services.
- What is necessary to expand Solidarity Economy?