

EXPANDED ABSTRACT

The social economy facing emerging economic concepts: social innovation, social responsibility, collaborative economy, social enterprises and solidarity economy

In the last two decades and prominently since the economic crisis and the crisis of legitimacy of the prevailing economic model based on for profit private businesses, a plurality of terms and notions have emerged in the academic field and in the economic and political world. They are concepts such as the social enterprises, the solidarity economy, the collaborative economy, the circular economy, the economy of the common good, the fourth sector, the social innovation and the corporate social responsibility. The objective of this paper is to explain this new wave of notions, to study their meanings and to identify their differences and commonalities in relation to the consolidated concept of social economy. This work is based on the study carried recently for the European Economic and Social Committee (Monzón & Chaves, 2017).

Within the framework of the Kuhn's theory of the scientific revolutions, in this paper we have proposed that in the social sciences, major changes in paradigms or scientific revolutions, and with them, changes in the language and concepts that generate a new worldview, are produced simultaneously to the great crisis and socio-economic transformations. In this framework, for the recent history, we have identified two periods of scientific revolutions in the field of the social economy / third sector, which we have called 'conceptual waves' and, between them, a period of normal science. The first wave of concepts appeared in the late seventies and eighties, with the oil crisis. During this first wave, the concepts of the social economy and of the nonprofit emerged. As rival approaches they coexisted as mainstream normal science until the second wave. The second wave of notions came out during the current economic crisis and the legitimization of the prevailing economic model. Other explanatory factors, linked to the sociology of the social scientist and of sociopolitical type, may also have influenced this proliferation of notions, such as the scientist pressure for differentiation and originality, and the positioning of some institutions in favor of some terms and against others.

The social economy concept continues to be, with that of nonprofit organizations, the mainstream paradigm to refer to the 'space between the public economy and the private for profit economy'. It has a broad scientific and political consensus regarding its definition, it is well institutionalized and quantified and it has a strong scientific and social notoriety. It is a concept based on structural criteria, such as its social aims, its participatory and democratic decisional criterion and its profit distributive criterion based on the prevalence of people and labor factor over capital. Finally, it is not reduced to a few classical legal forms. Between these two main concepts of the "first wave" there are significant differences

in terms of their scope and their structural criteria, as well as in terms of their systemic functions. Their main differences focus on the importance given to the social mission and the democratic criterion in the social economy approach and on the relevance of the distributive criterion, based on the non-distribution constraint, in the second approach.

The following conclusions have been obtained from a detailed analysis of the different emerging concepts. First, given its novelty, there is still no broad consensus regarding their definitions. Terminological inflation is then joined by a semantic inflation. Secondly, these notions present are still in an incipient institutionalization process, if we attend their inclusion in official documents or position papers of the European institutions. Thirdly, they still present a low level of academic and social notoriety, measured by their presence in specialized academic search engines, such as Dialnet and Google Scholar. From its semantic comparative analysis with that of the social economy, it can be seen that they are not rival concepts with the latter, but rather complementary and even revitalizing concepts of the social economy concept itself. This conclusion has been reached using the following typology of these concepts:

Group 1, notions linked to the main challenges/fields of the system crisis and transformation; Group 2, notions linked to the reorientation of the objectives and governance of organizations and economies, both at the micro and macro level, with new assess and incentive mechanisms; and finally, Group 3, notions linked to new ways of understanding entrepreneurship.

In the first group are included the concepts of social innovation, collaborative economy and circular economy, which refer to areas of system transformation such as, respectively, innovation, the digital revolution and the environment. They are transversal areas to the public, business private for-profit sector and third sector, and these paradigms constitute new approaches, both micro and macro, to face the challenges. In the second group are the notions of corporate social responsibility and the common good economy, which refer to the need to establish new mechanisms for evaluating economic performance and new incentive mechanisms that prioritize the social dimension. They are also transversal to the public, for-profit sector and third sector. Finally, the notions of social enterprise, social entrepreneurship, fourth sector and solidarity economy are integrated in the third group. These last notions refer to specific entities and enterprises. In the case of social enterprises and the solidarity economy, their proximity to the social economy is maximum, to the point of being considered part of the latter. The importance of the participatory and deliberative dimension of the solidarity economy concept has undoubtedly contributed to the emergence in Europe of another new term, integrating both: the 'social and solidarity economy'.

In summary, the new notions that have emerged in the context of the crisis of legitimacy of the hegemonic economic model must be considered complementary and even revitalizing with respect to the concept of the social economy.

KEYWORDS: Social Economy, Nonprofit sector, Solidarity Economy, Collaborative Economy, Social Enterprises, Social Innovation, Social Responsibility, Scientific revolutions.